

They're bunnylicious

They're eggciting, they're bunnylicious, they're fast, they're testing, they're furious fun, they're what you've been waiting for all winter, and great if you like getting beaten by 12 year olds. These are the Bunny Runs that spring to life every April. There is a time and a place for healthy eating, but it's definitely NOT at a Bunny, since even a chocoholic would have problems coping with the chocolate prize list!

These races even offer for the true Hares amongst you something special, the 'Egg Stage', a fast and furious dash round the small loop which is rewarded with extra chocolate for the first man and lady past the hopping bunny sign. Remember though, you must still finish the race with all that lactic acid in your legs.

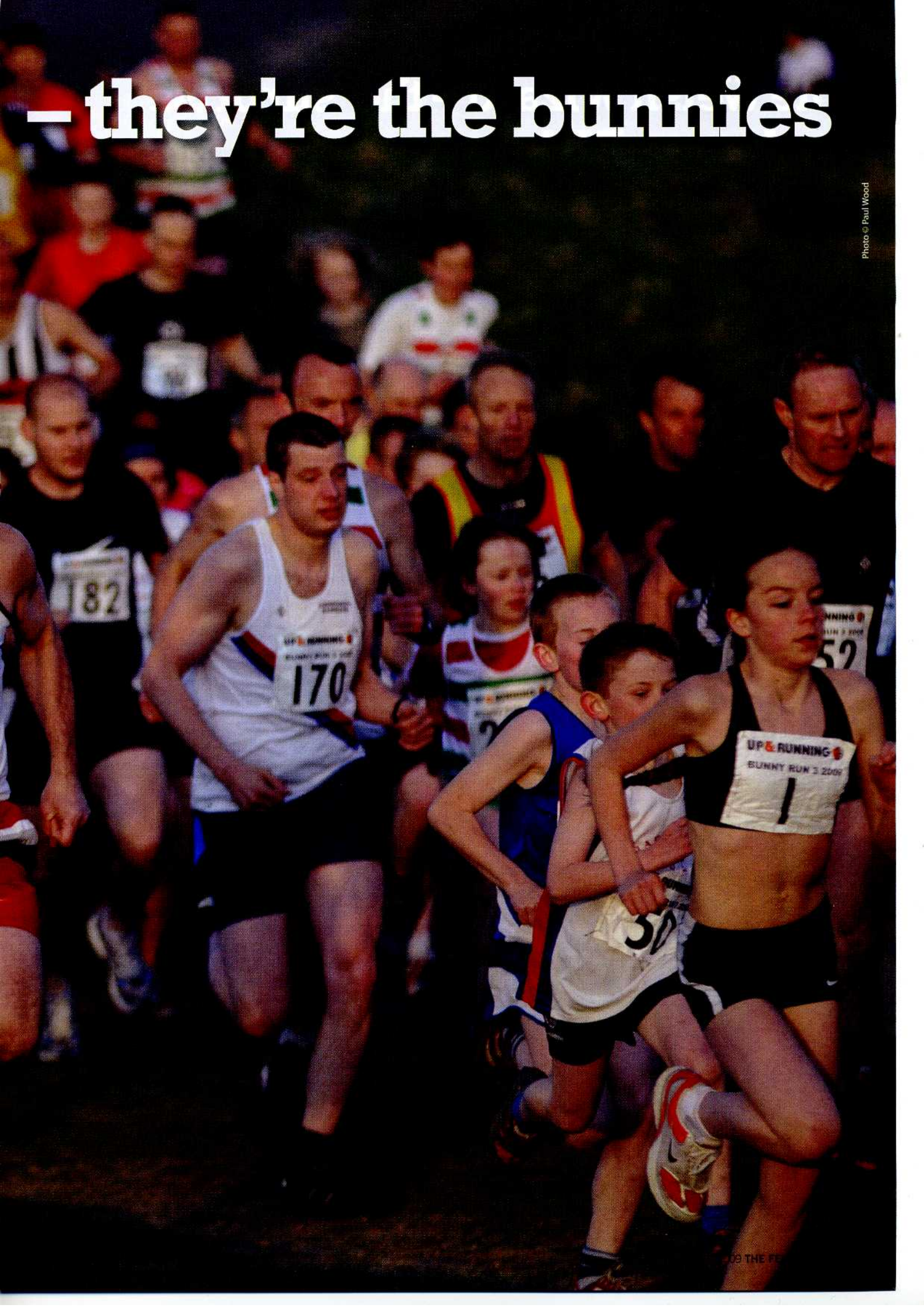
Three more lucky Bunny Bob Tailers are destined to feed their sweetie tooth craving because all entrants are entered into a free chocolate prize draw. Runners and spectators can take part in the weekly 'guess the winners time' competition and guess what the prize is ... AN EASTER EGG!

The Bunnies are renowned for their post race fun – free soup and roll in the Old Sun Hotel, that nights race video on the TV, stacks and stacks of Easter Eggs as prizes and people watching in awe as the first man, lady and vet stagger under the sheer weight of goodies. Then of course the finale, it's the famous chocolate throw out with an extra twist this year. Because in amongst the chocolate were such delights as chilli & chocolate, builder's breakfast and good old fish & chip flavoured crisps, with even more magic being provided by popping candy, literally raining down on everyone at the prize giving.



- they're the bunnies

Photo © Paul Wood



The Welsh Wizard – the surprise package – BR1



Photo © Paul Wood

New record holder Jorge Thomas at BR1

What a surprise package Bunny One had, not only was it a record field of 286, including 113 ladies, but it was a perfect sunny evening and a Welsh Wizard won to boot! 26-year-old Jorge Thomas who lives only 400 yards from the race, had the magic formula to claim the honour of taking home the perpetual cuddly bunny rabbit trophy. He set a new course record of 14-41, the first runner under 15 minutes. Welsh international Jorge who runs for Cardiff AC is the current Yorkshire Cross Country Champion, and has twice previously won the Welsh Cross Country Championships. The Bunnies aren't totally new to him, because in 2005 at BR3 he finished 2nd to Rob Jebb, and then won the Bunny Egg Stage prize in 3-30. In 2005 the Bunnies were on Harden Moor, and it was the house wall type climb that did Jorge in. It was last year's BR1 winner, Andi Jones, who set a sizzling pace from the off, claiming the Egg Stage prize in a new record of 3-23, which took a second off Mark Buckingham's time. Olympian Alistair Brownlee and Tom Sessford followed this boiling pace until they cracked, while Jorge was back with 25 times winner Ian Holmes. Andi was caught by Jorge in Penistone Hill Quarry, then it was neck and neck all the way back until the final climb before the drop into Dimples Lane Quarry finish. "Andi made me work pretty hard on the descents and it was very fast. I'm strong on the hills, and kicked just off the top of the last climb. I have a real sweetie tooth and so does my girlfriend Amy, so all the chocolate prizes won't go to waste and we'll certainly enjoy them. My other passion is food, I would love to have been a chef, so the next best thing is running my own business called Swaledale Foods. This summer I hope to revise my pb's, especially my 1500m, (3 min, 45 sec) and 5km (14 min -40 sec) times now having Ian Mitchell coach me," said the Welsh Wizard Jorge. "I was doing well until Jorge left me for dead in the last 30m!!! The first job I did when I got home was to go on powerof10 database and find out about Jorge. No wonder I was left in his dust with his 49.9 seconds 400m and 3.45 1500m pace. Plus this morning's mega session didn't help me out, but anyway it's all looking good for the marathon. Tonight's race was a real lung burner with Jorge setting a new CR", said new Egg Stage record holder Andi. Alistair Brownlee who, during the Bunny series celebrated his 21st birthday, finished 3rd. But after running a pb of 29-48 in the Great Ireland Run 10km only 2 days previous wasn't too bothered, but still the question is will he ever win a Bunny Run? Ian Holmes won the veteran Bunny Rabbit trophy for the sixth time in 4th, and showing the high quality of the race Pendle Hill winner Tom Addison finished only 7th.

Recent Lad's Leap and Trunce winner Blue Haywood returned to Haworth after winning the Auld Lang Syne to take her fourth Bunny Run, having previously won in 2004 at BR4 and 2005 where Blue won BR1 and BR4. Blue also won the Egg Stage for the second time in 4-04, but do remember the ladies Egg Stage only started in 2006; otherwise we're sure this little dynamo would have won more. Blue isn't the only Haywood dynamo, younger sister Bo who won the FU16's at the Trunce race took the FU14 honours here in 6th overall. Second lady overall was recent winner of both the Bradford and Keighley 10km races Helen Glover, who had the edge over Katie Walshaw and the FU16 winner Mel Hyder who both finished 3rd and 4th respectively. Ilkley Harrier Sally Morley in 5th set a new FV35 record of 19-18 taking 27 seconds off team mate Alison Bennett's 2007 record. The only other record on the night was by Andy Normandale of the York Acorn club who shaved 2 seconds off his own 2007 record. One remarkable achievement was how 12 year old Haran Dunderdale picked himself up off the grass after stumbling at the start, and somehow worked his way through the 254 runners to win the U14 age group, and more impressively finish 32nd overall. Haran finished just behind Lincoln Wellington teammate Blue Haywood, but more importantly ahead of dad Andy who was 34th and 4 seconds behind. This showed great strength of character from one so young. The majority of us would have just either pulled out or jogged round.

Note; Andi Jones went on to finish first Britain in a new PB of 2-15-24 at the London Marathon



Bunny Run 2

“You’re only as good as your last race” - BR 2

43 year old fell running legend and ‘Bunny Governor’ Ian Holmes incredibly won his twenty-sixth Bunny beating three times winner Willy Smith in an enthralling battle with 249 runners taking on the challenge. But first, numero uno Pendle AC athlete, Jack Thompson, who was featured in the FRA mag last year, convincingly won the Egg Stage, and equalled the course record of 3-23 set by Andi Jones the week previous. On the dry but overcast evening Ian and Willy were locked together, shoulder-to-shoulder even at this early point with no quarter given as the training partners battled for supremacy. As the route roller-coasted out of Penistone Hill Quarry, Willy had the edge but couldn’t break the iron will of Holmsey who has won races like the Ben Nevis, 3 Peaks, Bens of Jura, Mount Snowdon and Scafell Pike on so many occasions. It was only in the last 400 metres involving a swift descent and climb, that Ian opened the winning margin. “I couldn’t have Willy beat me, not again after the Bradford 10km, and especially not on a fell course”, said a triumphant Ian. “I tried my hardest, and really wanted it, but Ian just timed it perfectly, getting away on the descent. On the climb I tried to push, but was just trading water, my legs had gone. You can’t help but like Ian, but if I hear, ‘you’re only as good as your last race’, again I won’t be responsible for my actions!” said



A sea of colour & runners - BR2



Bruce Elsworth (114) & Jack Smith (224), both of Wharfedale

Sport Camps director Willy. This quote came about when Ian was asked by a youngster at Keighley and Cravens recent presentation evening, “who is the best between you and Willy”, to which Ian had replied, “you’re only as good as your last race”. With Haworth international Andy Peace 3rd and twin brother Martin 7th along with Holmsey, Bingley Harriers won the team chocolate. Richmond and Zetland athlete Marc Scott who already holds the U14 record at 16-58 set two years ago added the U16’s record taking an impressive 31 seconds off Thomas Sessford’s old time. Ross Inglis, the second U16, was also inside the old mark with 16-26. Scott and Inglis finished 6th and 9th overall respectively. Junior England international Blue Haywood won the ladies race for the fifth time and improved last weeks time by 14 seconds again winning the Egg Stage, this time only 2 seconds outside Mary Wilkinson’s 3-59 record. Blue is sure making an impact on the fells this year having just finished 2nd at the Easter

Sunday Shining Cliffs race. Blue’s sister, Bo, the Notts. Cross Country champion finished 3rd at Shining Cliffs and here won the FU14 for the second week. Another former junior England international, Helen Glover, finished 2nd again, improved her time by 34 seconds and had Blue in her sights all the way round. Katie Walshaw finished 3rd again and BOFRA U17 champion Mel Hyder finished first FU16 in 4th. In 5th place was last years BR4 winner Emma Spencer. Keighley and Craven ladies, with Helen 2nd, Holly Williams 9th and 2nd FU14 Rosie Hellawell 12th won the team chocolate eggs for the second week. In the packed pub runners were spoilt for choice with the race video being played on one TV and Chelsea V Liverpool in the champions league on the other big screen. Both were thrilling to watch, although once the mountain of chocolate eggs appeared only a three-eyed monster would have been able to cope with all this activity. Mind you the little darlings gave it a good go ... bless.

Time & tide waits for no man, unless your name is Ian Holmes – BR 3

Ian Holmes' first ever Bunny win came way back in 1994, when this year's FU14 winner Bo Haywood hadn't even been born, and neither had probably a good quarter of the field! In 1994, Ian won three races outright and, of course, the series. 15 years on and he has clinched this year's series, with two wins and a 4th. The saying is time and tide waits for no man, unless of course your name is Ian Holmes. 'The Bunny Governor', as Ian is known, eased to his twenty-seventh Bunny win, and fifth series win, but he didn't have things all his own way as Cumbrian international Tom Addison, the recent winner of the prestigious Pendle Hill race held his nerve to take the Egg Stage prize. Tom could literally hear Ian breathing down his neck as he won in 3-25 ahead of the 270 strong field on a sunny evening. "The Egg Stage win would have been a bonus, but Tom was so determined and kicked just at the right time. If I'd have kicked with him I'd have been in so much oxygen debt for the rest of the race, I probably wouldn't have won," said Ian. Tom managed to get his breathe back to eventually finished 5th only a minute down on Ian's 15-10 winning time. Second was Ilkley's Tom Adams, breaking the 16-minute barrier for the first time, while Graham Pearce finished third in 15-42. Bingley Harriers once again won the team with Ian 1st, Tim Midgeley 6th and 47-year-old John Convery 8th. 12 year old William Smith of Wharfedale finished 31st overall and bettered his BR1 time by 45 seconds to win the U14, but did have team mate Ben Johnstone for company most of the way. At the other end of the age scale, 77-year-old Brian Leathley just managed to enter in time, but missed the start by one minute. We felt it only fair and proper to adjust his finishing time accordingly, after all he is our very own V70 record holder! 17-year-old Blue Haywood won for the sixth time and the series for a third, and next year will be immortalised on the Bunny Beer label along with Ian. Blue recorded 17-31, an improvement of 18 seconds, displaying a mature head on young shoulders, she also won the Egg Stage for a fourth time in the second fastest ever; 4 minutes dead and only a second shy of Mary Wilkinson's milestone 3-59. Second, in 17-59 was National Police cross Country champion Emily Klee. The 23 year old overhauled Helen Glover on the final climb, while Bunny regular Mel Hyder improved her own FU16 record to 18-19, an improvement of 16 seconds. In 5th place Sally Morley improved her own FV35 record by 21 seconds. Close on all these girls heels was FU14 winner, 12-year-old Bo Haywood who recorded a time of 19-04. Normal Bunny madness resumed at the Old Sun Hotel, with a special presentation and thank you to Steph and Stuart Thompson who each week take time out to video the race. Stuart sets off with the camera and does a nifty hand over to Steph, which enabled him this week to finish 2nd V60. All this is done so you Bunny fiends can relive the race by watching yourselves on the TV, sweating and straining round the course.

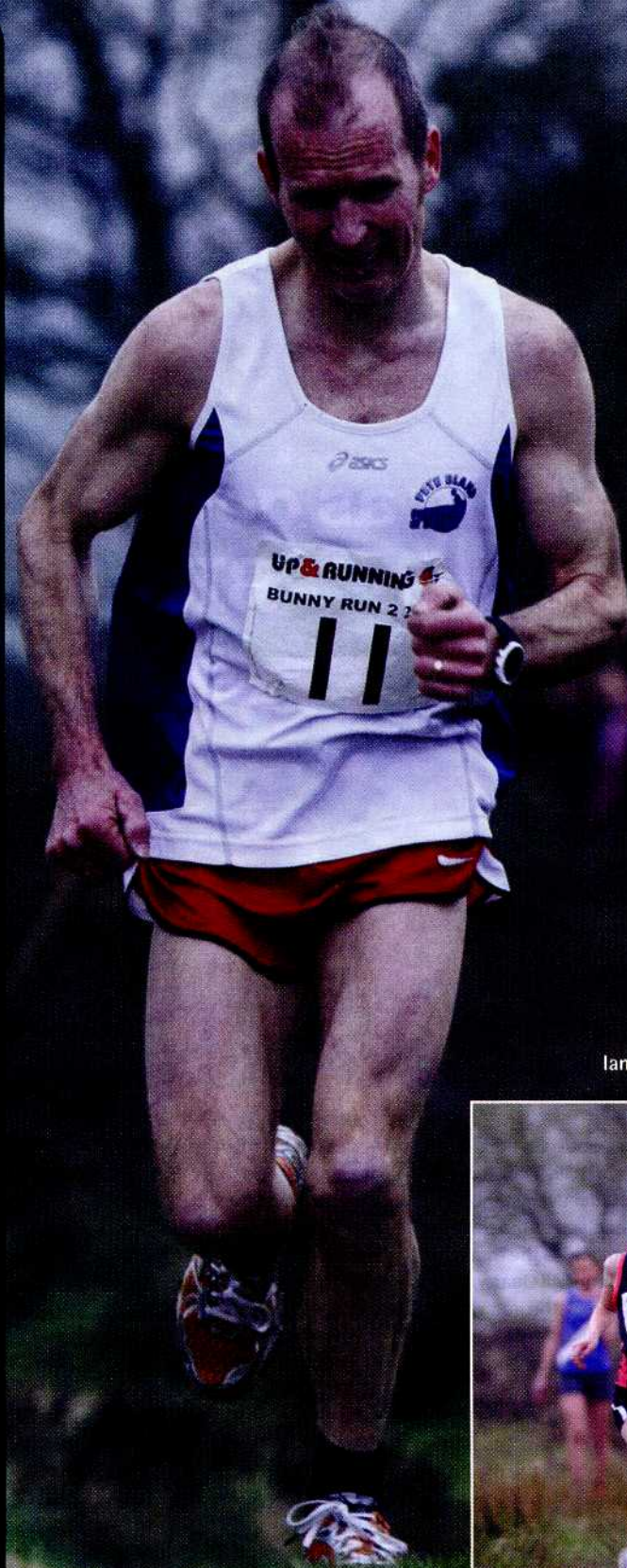


Photo © David Brett

Ian Holmes – Bunny winner

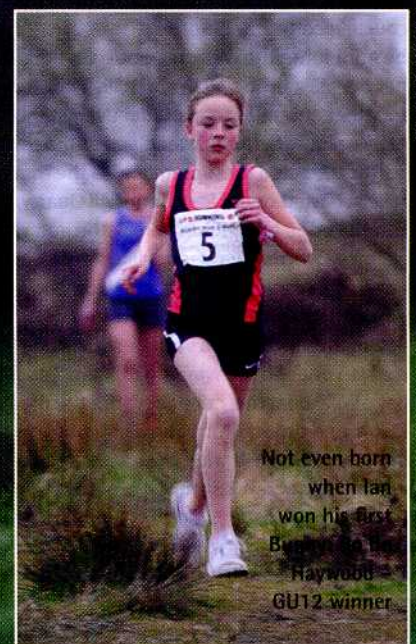


Photo © Paul Wood

Not even born when Ian won his first Bunny Bo Haywood – GU12 winner

Time & tide waits for no man, unless your name is Ian Holmes – BR 3

Ian Holmes' first ever Bunny win came way back in 1994, when this year's FU14 winner Bo Haywood hadn't even been born, and neither had probably a good quarter of the field! In 1994, Ian won three races outright and, of course, the series. 15 years on and he has clinched this year's series, with two wins and a 4th. The saying is time and tide waits for no man, unless of course your name is Ian Holmes. 'The Bunny Governor', as Ian is known, eased to his twenty-seventh Bunny win, and fifth series win, but he didn't have things all his own way as Cumbrian international Tom Addison, the recent winner of the prestigious Pendle Hill race held his nerve to take the Egg Stage prize. Tom could literally hear Ian breathing down his neck as he won in 3-25 ahead of the 270 strong field on a sunny evening. "The Egg Stage win would have been a bonus, but Tom was so determined and kicked just at the right time. If I'd have kicked with him I'd have been in so much oxygen debt for the rest of the race, I probably wouldn't have won," said Ian. Tom managed to get his breathe back to eventually finished 5th only a minute down on Ian's 15-10 winning time. Second was Ilkley's Tom Adams, breaking the 16-minute barrier for the first time, while Graham Pearce finished third in 15-42. Bingley Harriers once again won the team with Ian 1st, Tim Midgeley 6th and 47-year-old John Convery 8th. 12 year old William Smith of Wharfedale finished 31st overall and bettered his BR1 time by 45 seconds to win the U14, but did have team mate Ben Johnstone for company most of the way. At the other end of the age scale, 77-year-old Brian Leathley just managed to enter in time, but missed the start by one minute. We felt it only fair and proper to adjust his finishing time accordingly, after all he is our very own V70 record holder! 17-year-old Blue Haywood won for the sixth time and the series for a third, and next year will be immortalised on the Bunny Beer label along with Ian. Blue recorded 17-31, an improvement of 18 seconds, displaying a mature head on young shoulders, she also won the Egg Stage for a fourth time in the second fastest ever; 4 minutes dead and only a second shy of Mary Wilkinson's milestone 3-59. Second, in 17-59 was National Police cross Country champion Emily Klee. The 23 year old overhauled Helen Glover on the final climb, while Bunny regular Mel Hyder improved her own FU16 record to 18-19, an improvement of 16 seconds. In 5th place Sally Morley improved her own FV35 record by 21 seconds. Close on all these girls heels was FU14 winner, 12-year-old Bo Haywood who recorded a time of 19-04. Normal Bunny madness resumed at the Old Sun Hotel, with a special presentation and thank you to Steph and Stuart Thompson who each week take time out to video the race. Stuart sets off with the camera and does a nifty hand over to Steph, which enabled him this week to finish 2nd V60. All this is done so you Bunny fiends can relive the race by watching yourselves on the TV, sweating and straining round the course.

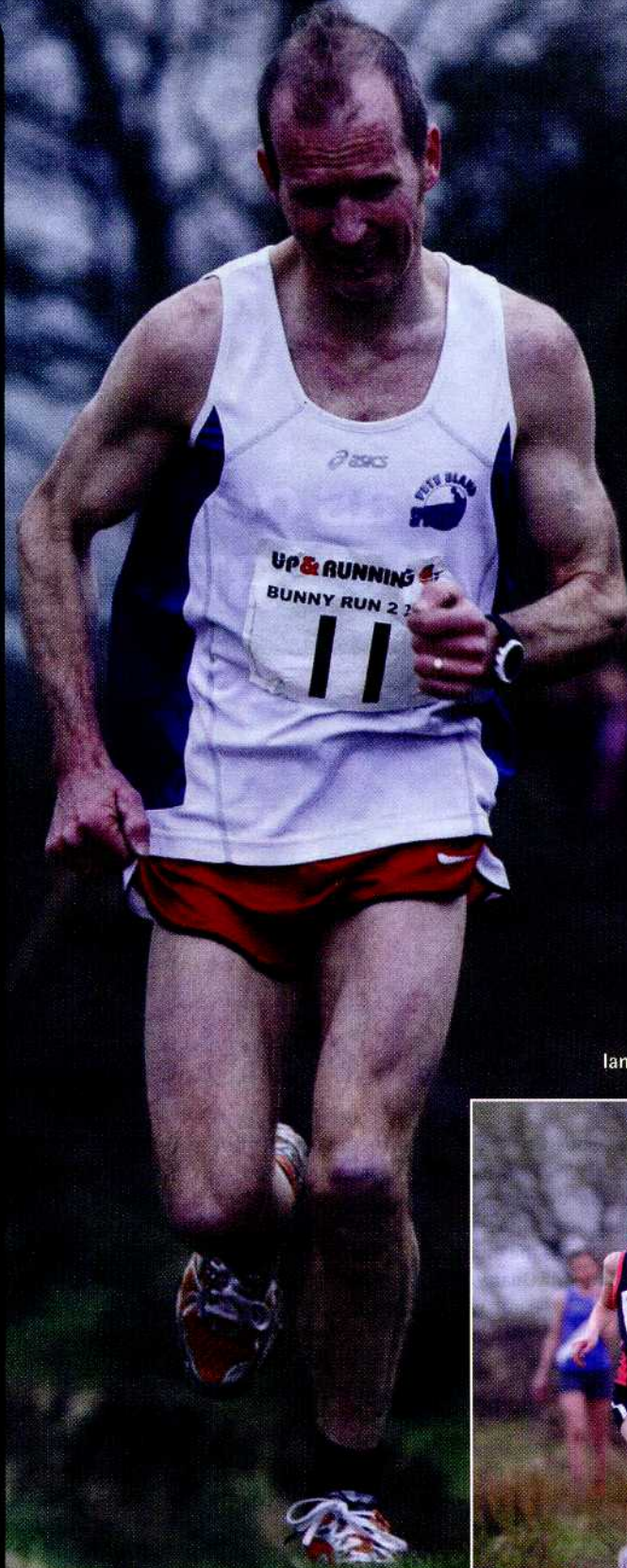


Photo © David Brett

Ian Holmes – Bunny winner

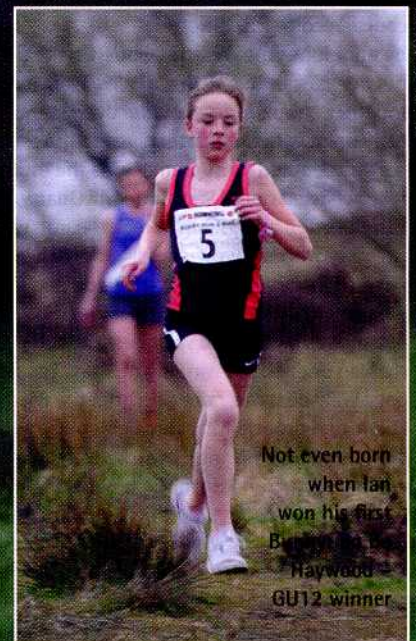


Photo © Paul Wood

Not even born when Ian won his first Bunny Bo Haywood – GU12 winner

Blue is red hot! - BR4

Photo © David Woodhead



Top Bunny girls - Mel Hyder, Katie Walshaw, Blue Haywood & Helen Glover

Reports say that it's been the hottest April in 10 years, with sun seekers packing beaches and parks all over Britain. However, fun seekers have been packing the Bunnies making it the hottest place to be on a normally boring Tuesday evening. The weather broke here, with the rain making the parched ground a little 'tricksey' in places but it still didn't deter 223. Bunny fame has even spread across the water to sunny California USA. Wanting to sample fell running Professor Allen Doyle running for Golden Valley Harriers took time out from lecturing at Bradford University to finish 100th overall in 21-28. English folk are renowned for their eccentricity; well, maybe these races just confirmed it to Allen, with the normal prize giving madness and

chocolate throw out, he was awarded two bottles of unique Bunny Beer to take back across the pond. One extra for Allen because, believe it or not, his wife is called BUNNY!

2006 FRA Fellrunner cover girl Blue Haywood is red hot at the moment and made it four straight wins in both the Egg Stage and the individual races to win the series for the third time. 17 year old Blue has now won seven Bunnies, which ties her with Pauline Munro in the title stakes, ahead of Carol Greenwood's six, Sarah Rowell's five and Sharon Taylor's four. The top honour here goes to Kath Drake with ten wins. If Blue has the inclination to go for more she certainly has got time on her side. Just 23 seconds behind Blue was Emily Klee from Leeds



Photo © David Woodhead

Rogue Bunnies at BR4 - Jordan Beard, Adam Osborne, Graham Pearce, Willy Smith & Tom Addison

City in second, improving on third last week, whilst first FU16, Emma Spencer, was third. A ritual of the prize giving is that all the runners packed in the Old Sun Hotel shout BO BO when the FU14 winner is announced. Bo Haywood takes all this in her stride, even excitedly jumping up and down at registration when issued with the elite number BO BO. 30-year-old Willy Smith won his fourth Bunny after being pushed all the way by 32 year old schoolteacher Adam Osborne. Willy just couldn't wait to get his hands on the case of Bunny Beer he was presented with in recognition of winning the series last year, as the label featured a 'shy retiring' picture of himself. Fell runners are renowned as a hard breed, well you can't get much harder than 28 year old Graham Pearce, who only 3 days prior had finished a magnificent 4th in the Three Peaks classic fell race. Here he was determined to win the short sharp Egg Stage prize. His legs nearly faltered as Willy chased him down, but he just had enough in his sore and tired legs to hold on to win in 3-29, and then managed to hold it together to finish a creditable 10th. It was a long haul in the pub with BR4 prizes and then overall prizes being awarded, but the race video kept many amused, and by the time the chocolate throw out began it was still standing room only.

Rain, rain and more rain! - BR Relay

Only mad dogs and Bunny Runners would go out racing in these wet and soggy conditions. Rain, rain and more rain was the forecast and unfortunately for once they were right. But that didn't deter a surprising, but fantastic 60 teams toeing the start line with their unique egg relay batons in hand, having not a care about the incessant rain and gale force winds which whipped across Penistone Hill. Because of this weather the organisers decided to dispense with the short lap on leg one, which meant no Egg Stage, so all the legs were over the long lap only, which was well received by all taking part. In fact, due to the heartening feedback from the runners, in future all Bunny relay legs will be run over the long lap only, which is roughly one and a half miles and 200ft. The very wet and slippery conditions made for some interesting changeovers with generally not much yolk being spilled. What a great effort the two fancy dress teams Sunny Furry Scaries and Tod Bunnies put in; one, to get their outfits and two, to compete in the atrocious conditions.

Well done and thanks for taking part in this new prize category. A relay is all about team work, and the Bunny relay emphasises this more than any other, because families, juniors, friends and total strangers get together to transport a little unassuming funny coloured chunky egg safely up and down, round and round the contours of one of the highest and bleakest points that Haworth has to offer. The warmth of the Old Sun Hotel was a welcome haven after everybody's exploits with its free minestrone soup and roll, the race video playing and the banter that only fell runners can generate. If the conditions have been very arduous, the tales that get told are as good as 'the one that got away'. As always at the prize giving there's a quirky element thrown in, this week it was **flashing teeth** for all category team winners, with the customary stash of Easter Eggs. Beer was also added to Rossendale Dwarves - overall winners, 3 People - first ladies, Plucky Pearce Pacers - first family and Sunny Furry Scaries - first fancy dress.

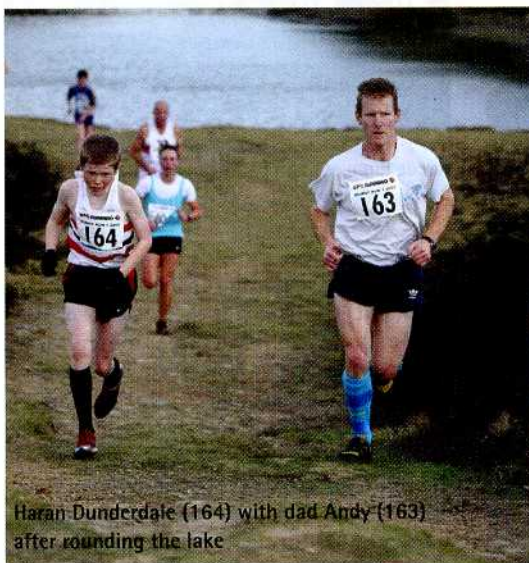


Photo © David Woodhead

Bunny girl Holly Crossfield, who gave out all the 1028 Cadbury Creme Eggs

Under 14 winner Bunny 2 – Haran Dunderdale of Lincoln Wellington AC

Photo © David Brett

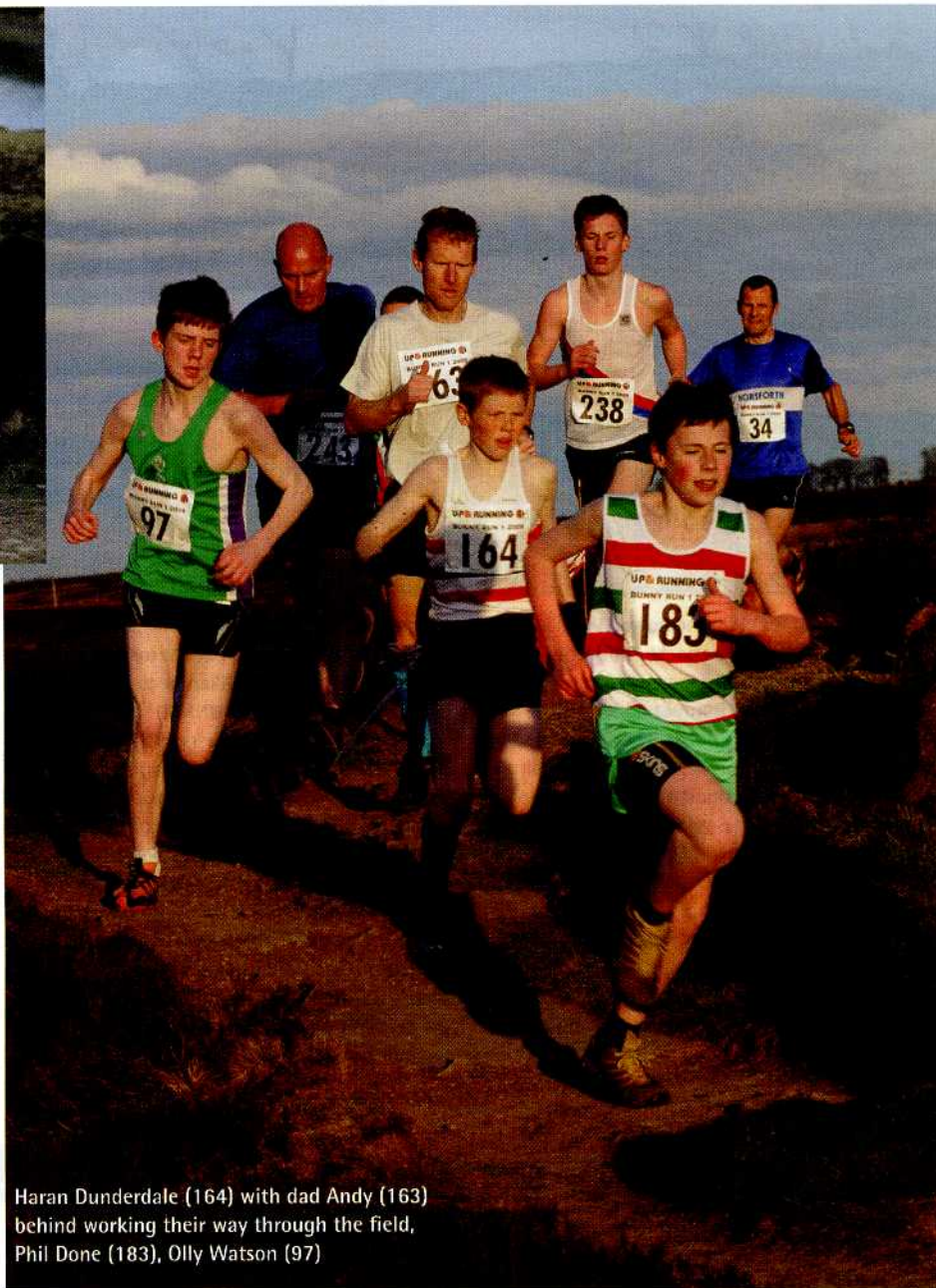


Haran Dunderdale (164) with dad Andy (163) after rounding the lake

I'm 12 years old from Lincolnshire and I love athletics and football. I have an elder brother and sister who also play football and enjoy athletics. Last year my sister, Hannah (14) got to the English Schools Athletics Championships and competed in the 75m Hurdles and Pentathlon. As an under 13 she was number one in England for Pentathlon with 6th best score of all time. My brother, Joe (16) has already qualified with the Javelin this year.

Joe and I both play football for Nottingham Forest and have just got back from this year's Easter Tour in Holland.

I have been running for as long as I can remember. It all started when my brother, sister and I used to go running with my dad, Andy, until we were old enough to join a running club. My dad got me to try all the events possible in track and field, saying I should have a go at everything to see what I was good at. I run for Lincoln Wellington AC and hold club U13 records at 600m - 1:43.9, 1 mile - 5:22.3, 3k - 10:48.5, 75m hurdles - 13.8, high jump - 1.42, javelin - 32.67m, discus - 21.94m, shot - 8.51m and Pentathlon - 1662 points. My highest UK ranking was 6th in the Pentathlon, 27th in the Javelin and 67th in the High Jump. What was really pleasing though was beating Joe's javelin record, but I was disappointed to only equal his 75m hurdles record. But it was only really when I was old enough to run the longer distances that I realised I preferred running long distance instead of short. It's funny how Joe and Hannah now prefer the shorter distances! When I was eleven, my dad entered me in the North Midlands U13 Cross Country League, where I came first overall. That year I also won the Lincolnshire Cross Country and the Anglian Schools Cross Country for year Sevens. This year I have competed at the Northern Championships where I finished 7th. We then went skiing in Italy just before the Inter Counties and although I was feeling tired I managed to finish 31st. After a few weeks training, I had a good run in the English Schools XC Championships where I finished 66th, where most of the fourteen year olds had



Haran Dunderdale (164) with dad Andy (163) behind working their way through the field, Phil Done (183), Olly Watson (97)

muscles and were bigger than my dad.

I train with Blue and Bo Haywood and, because I like running on hills, their mum, Sally, told me I should have a go at fell running because its fun. So with my dad I went to the first Bunny, to try it.

What an experience this was. After the first 10m I was on the floor, where I curled up like a jockey having just fallen off in the Grand National, while the other runners hurdled me. When I got up I was last and I felt blood on the side of my head where someone's foot had caught me. Fortunately my dad waited for me and so we then set off after the rest of the runners. The race wasn't what I had expected, I thought it was going to be just like a cross country but there was never a bit where you could relax. I had to think about where I put my feet all the way round, mainly because I was wearing track spikes. The most enjoyable part of

the race was the last hill where I got away from my dad. If I had a choice all races would finish on a long uphill. After the race we then went to the pub where there was a great atmosphere. This was the best part of the night, when I got loads of chocolate. I don't think I have ever seen as much chocolate as there was in the pub in my whole life.

Unfortunately while playing football in Holland, I got accidentally taken out by a German and have an ankle ligament injury, so I have been unable to run in any more of the Bunnies. I'm saving up for some fell shoes and looking forward to running in all of them next year, having more fun and hopefully getting some more chocolate.

My dream is to run for England one day, either over Cross Country or over the fells. Short term it's to beat Blue at next years Bunnies. I'm sure I'd have beaten her this year if I hadn't fallen over.

Photo © Paul Wood

Zoe Baistow, nickname Zed of Wharfedale Harriers

'I started running at the age of seven when I was in year 3, I'm now eleven years young and in year 6. I was inspired by my brother Scott by watching him run and getting medals, so I thought I wanted to do some running and be better than Scott. When the first X-Country came up, I put on an old pair of ETA's, they were a bit big, but they did me proud, I ended up coming through in fourth place. That's what made me want to carry on with running.

I later started to take up fell running, by going to some BOFRA races and Quarry Runs with my dad. I was round about eight then. My first club was one in Lancashire, Pendle AC, but I moved to one that concentrated on fells called Wharfedale Harriers, and train on a Monday with Dave Hird, but do X-Country training on Wednesday with school. I have recently just done a X-Country race for school and came second.

My favourite style of running is X-Country, and my favourite races are the Quarry runs and Bunny runs, also Alva, although it's steep! I like the descent there, camping over and going on all the fairground-rides and generally everybody enjoying themselves.

I live with my two annoying brothers Scott and Luke and my dad, Bob the bear, who is

always grumpy in the mornings. That's where the nickname comes from. Also Rocky and Baxter, the ferrets, they live outside of course and our little dog Jess.

I go to Foulridge School, which is just up the road from my house, so I run to the school most mornings! I also do other hobbies than running, because I'm not boring! I do netball, where I play centre and wing defence, hula hooping, biking and cricket, having just been picked to play a cricket match. I'm one of the best girl runners in the school, I'm the second best at X-Country and the BEST at fells!

At school I'm good at English, Science, Art, P.E. Design and Technology. In fact I'm good at every subject apart from maths. But I'm the best at talking, I'm always getting shouted at for talking by the teachers.

At home I try to help around the house, but normally end up playing out with mates on my trampoline. My favourite meals would have to be home made Carbonara and my second would be chicken wraps with salad on, being healthy. But I don't always have healthy meals I sometimes get fish and chips from Foulridge House. We have Take Away night on Friday night, but not all the time or I wouldn't be able to run!



Zoe Baistow

I also took part in the nursery play in 2000. I was a little rabbit and wore one of my brother Luke's costumes, and when I got home he started crying and screaming! Scott also took part in a nursery band in 1997, he was a drummer boy in a red guards suit. One nil to me Scott!

Scott Baistow, nickname Otter of Wharfedale Harriers

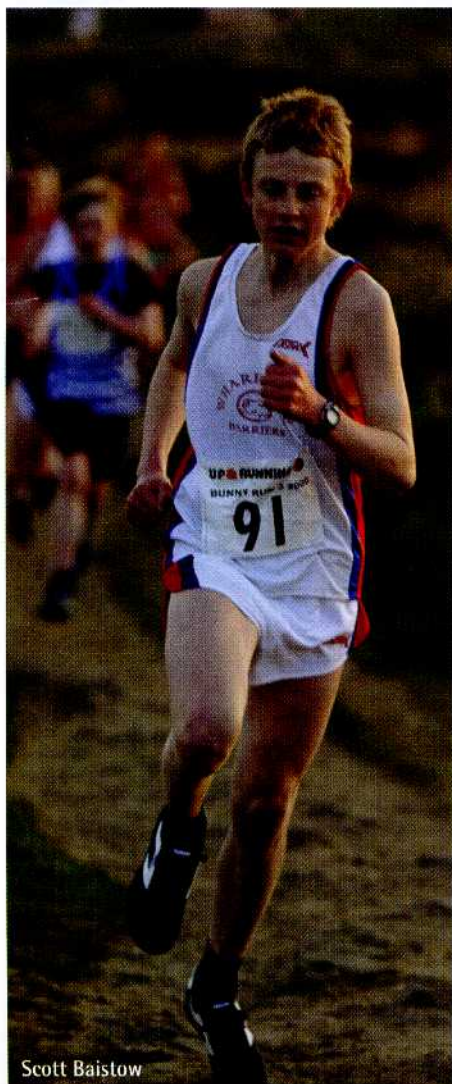
I started running at the age of nine in a series of Inter Schools X-Country races, which were based around Lancashire. In my first race out of the years 3 & 4 I came a respectable thirteenth position out of 46 runners. In later years when I moved up in to years 5 & 6, I was top of my age, and was regularly coming in the top three, which encouraged me to pursue the sport of running. The first fell race I can recall was up at Penistone Hill Quarry, running in one of the races battling round in horrendous winds and freezing temperatures, as it always is up there. I managed to get round in one piece and thought it was brilliant. After competing in some more local fell races I started regular training up Pendle Hill with my dad, and found it really good fun. In the year 2006 I joined BOFRA, and competed in the championship, finishing a respectable fifth place. I really took to it, and loved almost every race, some more than others. I found that I was better at steeper races than flatter ones. In the 2007 BOFRA championships I managed to come joint fourth place with Jacob Urin and even won my first fell race at Coniston Gullies. Everything went just right and I led all the way. In all I was pleased with my season and really enjoyed it.

As for last year as I was bottom age in the U17's, I found it quite difficult. There was lots of good competition. I did manage to finish in seventh, which wasn't too bad, but I felt I could have done better. As for my favourite races in the BOFRA, I like Coniston Gullies, as it is a good steep one and we also go camping there for the weekend, which is good fun. I also like Alva,

Kettlewell, Ambleside, Burnsall and Wasdale. These races are all steep; I prefer the steeper races as I think not enough fell races are steep enough. As for my season so far in 2009, I have just completed the Kendal Winter League, which are a series of races in and around Kendal. There are some really great races and they are really enjoyable. In the overall league I finished thirteenth, which I was quite disappointed with. I have just finished competing in the Bunny Runs, I do not particularly like these races, and do them for a bit of fun and speed training. The course is quite flat and fast therefore it does not suit my likings at all, similar to cross country, but you need to do them to improve your speed, plus it keeps me away from track, which is so boring!

As for the rest of 2009 I will be running the BOFRA races once again, some FRA races, and in the club championship where last year I finished in second place to Jonathan Bradshaw.

I also go mountain biking, which is also a good way to exercise the muscles that don't get used in running, I tend to do more biking in the winter, when the fell season finishes and the dark nights close in. This year we are hoping to go to Wales and walk up Snowdon, as I enjoy hill and mountain walking. Another one of my interests is camping. I like going camping up in the Lakes; Coniston, Eskdale and Wasdale are my favourites, and in Scotland; Alva, Glen Coe and Fort William. The thing I like about fell running is getting to so many different places that you wouldn't visit otherwise and that every fell race has it's own challenge.



Scott Baistow

FU16 Bunny Run series winner - Mel Hyder of Helm Hill Runners

Former English U12, twice U14 & U16 champion, English Uphill champion & current BOFRA U17 champion

'It was quite a surprise to see someone dart past me after all the effort I had put in. Mind you, I was only in year six and that cross-country at Morecambe and Lancaster College was my first race. So I guess the fact that I came second was ok. I mean, I learned the hard way. This was a race I did for my primary school in Bolton-Le-Sands. I got so carried away with all the crowds and cheering that I relaxed at the end. I also thought that I was too far in front for anyone to catch me. I was wrong! First lesson learned. Never take it easy until you are over the finish line. I was really pleased that my teacher, Miss. Rothwell, had entered me for the race and I'd had my first taste of real racing.

I left primary school and started at Dallam school, and it didn't take me long to discover the school had a good cross country club that would practice on a Friday evening after school. This was an opportunity I jumped at and from then on I was guided by my science teacher, John Hodgson, who was a member of Dallam running club. Mr. Hodgson invited me to the South Cumbria schools cross-country championships at Sedbergh, where I managed to come first. This time I overtook another girl in the final stages.

It was strange to think I had this talent and hadn't realised it. I hadn't really trained properly, but I was still invited by Mr. Hodgson to another set of races, the Kendal Winter League. These were fell races, and I didn't even know there was such a sport as fell running until about a week before the event at Scout Scar near Kendal. I ran my little legs off, put in a big effort at the end and came first girl. I was puzzled by my win, and so were the crowd, because I looked nothing like a fell runner in my little stiff rugby jumper and my baggy three quarter length trousers. At least I had my Walshes. To me that first race was a bit like cross country, and I expected all of these races to be much the same as that, so you can imagine the shock when I arrived at the steepness of Fairmile, not to mention Barbondale. My parents couldn't believe it either. They could hardly walk up these hills and I was going to run up them.

I am now 15 years old and still love doing the Kendal Winter League races, but things have changed. I now compete in many fell races, both championship, individual races and evening races. I have to thank my parents for all of this. My dad, Russell, has taken me to many races, some in the middle of nowhere, and my mum, Pauline, has supported me throughout, cheering me on. After doing some training with Helm Hill, I decided to make this my new club. My running has come on in leaps and bounds thanks to Billy

Proctor who trains me.

In 2007 I competed in my first Bunny. I can't remember my position, but I certainly enjoyed the race. As a matter of fact, I do most of the Bunnies now, although I always find it quite daunting on the start line, as there are so many people. In the first Bunny I did this year, there were so many people that I almost got pushed

over and trampled, fortunately though I kept my footing. Bunny Runs are great, I love the prizes and presentations. Half the time prize-winners can barely get out of the door as there are always a generous amount of prizes to be given out. Ultimately, I would like to win the Egg Stage without wearing myself out for the rest of the race!



Photo © David Brett



Photo © Paul Wood

FU16 winner Mel Hyder

'If a southern softie like me can do it ... anyone can!' – Nicola Walton of Harrogate Hydro Bunnies

I stood with trepidation amongst the throng of excited runners, listening to the hubbub of chatter around me, wondering how the blazes a southern softie like me was going to cope with the delights that a blustery Penistone Hill had to offer.

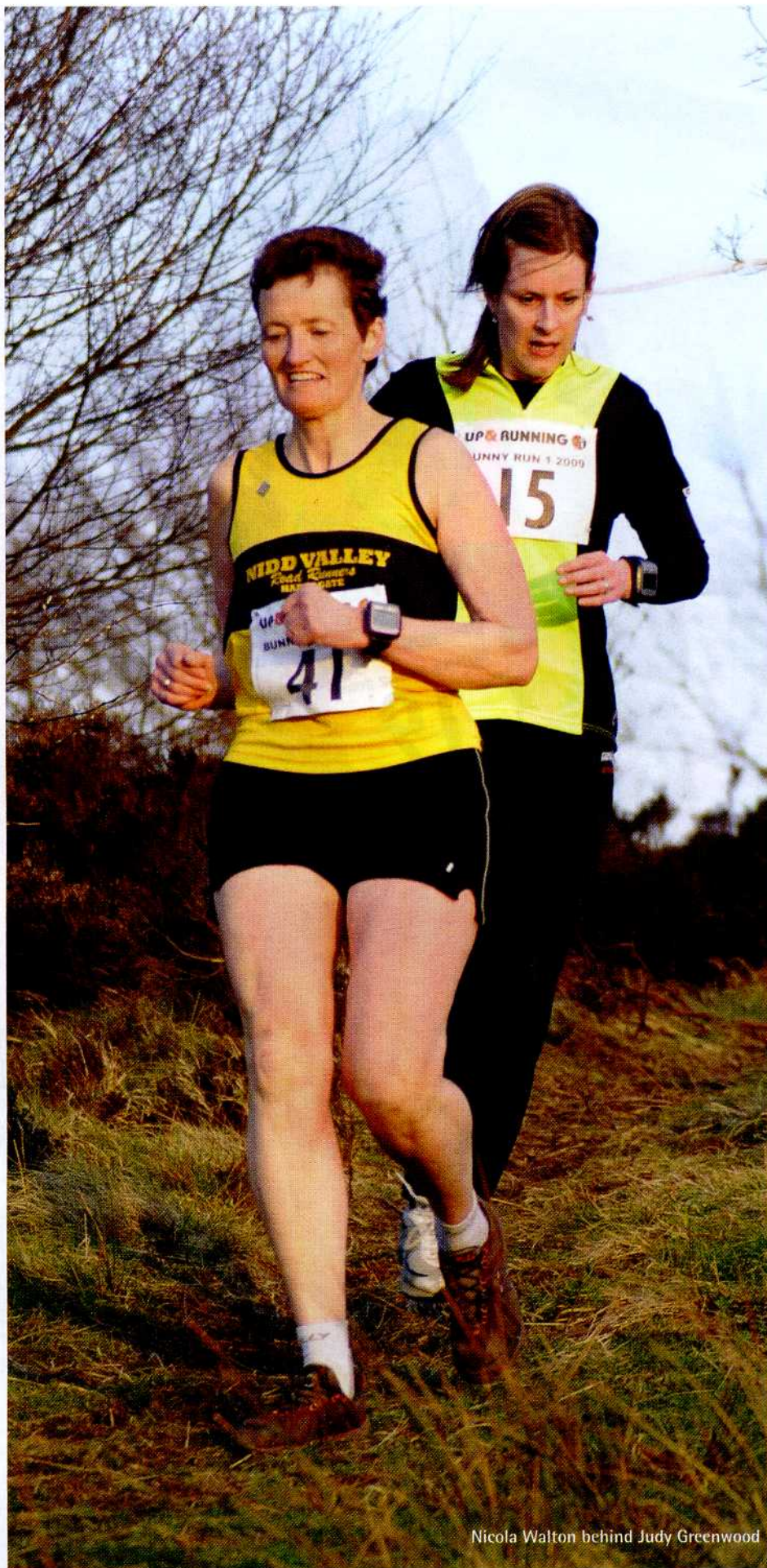
I moved to Harrogate in North Yorkshire from Gloucester in the South West, nearly 4 years ago and in that time I've started a new job, renovated a house, married the love of my life, James & had a beautiful baby boy, Alex. After an 18-month break from the second love of my life, running, and in an attempt to regain my pre-baby figure and beat PND I rejoined my local gym in January. Full of enthusiasm and endorphins I suddenly found myself agreeing to join accomplished fell runner Ian Rowbotham at the 1st BR. As we drove from Harrogate to Haworth with the Pennine Way closing in around me I began to wonder what the hell I'd let myself in for. The valleys of Gloucestershire are pimples on the landscape compared to this, I cried. "You'll be fine," said Ian excitedly "it's only 3 miles!"

An obvious novice to this sport I didn't really have a clue what fell running was (hell, I'm used to the rolling hills of the Cotswolds) or what you had to endure; I thought I might be in for a tough time and I was right. I've never experienced such a range of emotions over a 30-minute period and still come out the other side with the proudest feeling and biggest smile for something I've achieved. **Nervous excitement** - of a new challenge. **Worry** - that I'd be last or worse still fall arse over boob.

Dread & complete exhaustion - as I scrambled back up the other side of the near vertical part of the quarry on my hands and knees. **Pain** - as my lungs felt as though they'd burst and finally **total exhilaration** - as I picked up speed down into the quarry towards the finish line and realised I wasn't last! Saying that, the course was challenging but great fun, and the views were incredible when you got to the summit. And to top it all, it was a warm sunny evening and the ground was dry. Perfect.

I do remember part way round the long lap I felt a pang of envy knowing that the favourites were finishing and I was still only half way round with more steep hills and a lake to confront. Throughout the course the support and words of encouragement from spectators, marshals and finished runners alike spurred me on and kept my already tired aching body moving, determined to finish in one piece, which I did in a fairly respectable 29 mins.

The Old Sun provided the perfect place to wind down, enjoy hot soup and a roll and revel in the success and hard work that each and everyone achieved that evening. Dave hosted a very entertaining prize giving fest with the largest eggs I've ever seen and I even managed



Nicola Walton behind Judy Greenwood

to catch some magic popping candy, a new addition to the famous chocolate throw out.

I was welcomed and felt part of the fell running family and had the most wonderful

evening, and I would highly recommend anyone who would like to give it a go as this course was a perfect introduction - after all, **if a southern softie like me can do it ... anyone can!**



Ian Rowbotham

Racing and training the Bunny Way! – Bunny Run V50 series winner – Ian Rowbotham of Ilkley Harriers

Kenyans agree it's not just genetics, training at altitude and intense hard work that produces top runners. They also run hard in groups with periods of eye watering intensity. So you could say Bunny Runs, concentrated in April, are the ideal solution.

They are great introductions to fell running as "The Hydro Bunnies" found out. They also provide a fast 5K mid week race, have a great atmosphere, are well organised and above all immediate results; sticky labels rule. Then it's soup and a roll while we watch more than one video of the race in an atmospheric pub, with the icing on the cake being a generous and humorous prize giving, it's always the high light of the night. Here rows of children can be seen ever leaping like salmon up a water fall, all for the chocolate thrown out. The evening dissolves quietly, many leave with prizes, happy and weary with or without chocolate, and top runners are identified by their additional carrots, liquid, garlands and hats. Can I say you always seem to get more than a fell race at a fell race!!!

It took me some time to appreciate the joy of fell running. I am a Yorkshire man who grew up on Harrogate water whose favourite sport was rugby and Harrogate, Otley and Ilkley Rugby Union Football Clubs were kind enough to include me at scrum half. A swift descent through the sides and a corresponding fitness drop continued after I stopped playing rugby at 35. Cue James Towler who introduced me to the triathlon via swimming, mountain biking and running, of these running seemed the most attractive, because it was challenging, especially as my fitness had gone completely.

Stark reality hit me when I started trying to run and could not keep it going, in fact I could not even run a mile. Things had slipped too much, and reversing the slide took time, contrary to what most commercial running magazines suggest, this tactic still annoys me even now. Runs of a few minutes started to provide benefits, one mile out and back was a landmark. Fortunately Jane and I had two young children so this was ideal, initial runs were hard physically and mentally and they still are. David Murray opened my eyes to running, orienteering, night runs, etc. and then I joined Harrogate Harriers AC and was able to help as Chairman, where my motto was, "Ask not what your club can do for you, but what you can do". Help through training and local road races led to a London Marathon, eventually in under 2hrs 50. Runners such as David Askew then kindly led me into fell running, surprisingly many still put up with my training and coaching tips. A desire to improve, travel further to races and to do more fell running training, led me to join the excellent folk at Ilkley Harriers, there thanks to Peter Shields and Jane my running has improved a bit more.

Off road running seems such a natural thing to do. Why? Because it is natural, it gets us out experiencing our beautiful area, the harsh terrain and weather simply add more of a challenge. Mix in the excitement, friendship, rivalry and emotions and you have even more reasons why. The race age categories provide an extra reason why to train and race. A wise runner reminded me that his best years running were aged 39 and 49, so I am trying not to over do it at 50.

In conclusion we don't have the benefit of a rich genetic pool and altitude, but we do have the benefit of hard runs out with groups of others over the moors. Races like these provide great racing and training in the bracing air, amongst many like minded folk. They are hard races and are a concentrated form of good training. You could even think you were in an elite Kenyan training group, you're in such good company.

'Little did I know what I was getting into' – Professor Allen Doyle of Golden Valley Harriers, California, USA

'Fifteen years ago a Welsh friend in Fairbanks, Alaska told me of fell running, and this April I fulfilled my dream of joining one. Mind you, it was called The Bunny Run, which involves bribery by chocolate, and doesn't sound too menacing compared to Alaskan events like "the Annihilator", "Crow Pass Crossing" or "Mount Marathon", which is an out-and-back 5k with 3,000 feet of climbing, then plunging down snow and scree. Little did I know what I was getting into.

My Bradford hosts notified the race director that I was coming, and he met me at the registration pub with a deceptively warm smile. I should have been on my guard when he assured my participation by offering me two "Bunny Beers" that are normally awards for old (and young too). The labels feature last year's female and male winners. To further lure unsuspecting participants, the minimal £2 registration came with a chocolate egg as well.

His ominous side came out at the start, where he bellowed instructions above the din of 250 milling runners. Avoiding electronic amplification, he quickly intimidated the pack into silence, and pushed the throng around like an intent sheep dog. When announcing a car had its lights on, he sounded like a clansman calling a horde into battle. He then abandoned a young woman in front of the mob to start us off, and she certainly would have been trampled when she said, "go". Yet she was savvy enough to avoid saying, "ready, set", so we were caught off guard and didn't have a fair chance to get her underfoot.

Having placed myself mid-pack with respect to my current fitness, I was impressed at the courtesy of my fellow combatants, even though it took five minutes before we were single file on the trail. The second time up a grassy gully I was ready to elbow my way past defiant grandmothers, but it wasn't necessary because they were all tougher and faster than me.

The heath parkland overlooks rolling farms and villages, and the course was three different loops totalling under 5 k, in and out of quarries on nicely rutted paths and greasy inclines. We nicely skied down the grass into one quarry without catastrophe, and I found myself among the leaders – of twelve-year-old boys and girls. I nauseously straggled in to the finish after being out-kicked by an adolescent rival, then lingered among the muddy throng who looked quite satisfied with themselves. I mistakenly drank the after-race beverage from a jug, which must have been a magic potion that made my muscles sore for two days. The locals were obviously immune to its powers.

At the awards "ceremony" in the pub, the director's vocal thundering continued once we were stuffed inside like oatmeal in haggis. No one was intimidated, as he lavished awards on the series winners for each age group including stuffed rabbits, strobe-light ornaments, giant chocolate eggs, Homer Simpson donuts, and Bunny Beer. The young crowd's mood built to a frenzy for the pinnacle event: a shower of chocolate eggs hurled with wanton abandon by the director, who devilishly appealed to mob fervour, knowing they will likely return again for another frenetic event next year.

The youth of this valley have been corrupted irreparably, I'm afraid. I met an apparently wholesome family that regularly joins this event, and the parents were unconcerned while exposing their children to this melee, in fact they encouraged it. They warmly welcomed me from abroad and even invited me home for the night. My resolve softened and I almost accepted, instead pledging to return for training runs another day.

In this four-event series the sun had shone previously, and it was only proper that there would be light rain today to cool us off and make the footing appropriately slippery. Despite that I found most runners' times improved in these conditions, and I realised I was among my people. Anyone looking for a soggy, ankle twisting good time needs to check out fell running, and especially this series of muddy madness.'



American
Professor
Allen Doyle

Photo © Paul Wood