

MILK OR PLAIN THAT'S THE QUESTION

A processed food low in nutrients and high in fat, isn't the most ideal food after exercise, experts recommend a banana or apple with orange or an electrolyte drink. But to all 1000 Bunny Run competitors giving out fruit would be a travesty, compared to the gooey Cadbury's Creme Eggs which every finisher gleefully received at this 3 mile Tuesday evening series of races. Probably the only way the 'Woodentops' organisers could get away with complying with the experts is by coating an apple on a stick with chocolate.

The advertising themes of 'A Mars a day helps you work, rest and play', 'have a break have a Kitkat', mean nothing compared to the classic, 'how did you eat yours?'. Did you take it home for the kids, Shaun and Mick Addison, eat it with your pint, Mick Lolley, saved it for later, Andy Peace, or did you stuff it in your gob for that immediate fix after you raced.

Creme Eggs were in short supply this year, so Rolo and Velvet Eggs were rolled in off the substitute bench, to the delight of Tod Harrier, Ian Harvey, "Well cool".

STUART SMITH - HORWICH PENS HIS VIEWS

"We lined up at 7.15 on a glorious evening to hare around this, the second of the four Bunny Runs after a blast from Dave's foghorn - Leghorn. The 206 strong field set off like rabbits being chased by hounds towards Grinning Stone on Harden Moor. First to here won an egg and a t-shirt. This was the eventual winner Gary Devine, in 3.26. He coursed around to a hare of the dog in the guide in 17.15 after a steep hands and knees job and return via Grinning Stone. The ladies, Jessica Wabbit was Carol Greenwood finishing the frame in 20.41. Yours truly didn't quite eggs-actly lollipop around much like any Bugs Bunny, more like Elmer Fudd in 26.41. Every finisher received a Creme Egg along with a cracking good prize list of chocolate eggs. Thanks for an eggstravaganza, and shelling out only £1.50 from a Gary Glitter (rhyming) of a run on one of his re-runs after a 2½ year layoff."

April 1 BUNNY RUN ONE

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.

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, and National Duathlon champion Peace, pulled well clear and ran side-by-side for well over two-thirds of the race.



*Carol Greenwood, ladies winner of the Bunny Run Series, amongst many other races, leads Bunny Run organiser Dave Woodhead on the climb to Brown Wardle in the Wardle Skyline Race
Photo: Bill Smith*

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 four races.

Although no records were set at the sharp end, Bradford's Steve Oldfield found himself much closer to settling 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 December'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.

Not surprisingly this was a 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!"

April 8 BUNNY RUN TWO

Gary Devine claimed victory in the second event in the four-race series.

After placing third (behind Ian Holmes and Andy Peace) in the series opener, the 1990 British champion proved too strong for Bradford postman Gary Oldfield taking the en-route 'Egg Stage' prize in 3:26 - four seconds outside Holmes' record - and going on to finish 18 seconds clear.

With Holmes opting to give the race a miss admitting his legs were "too stiff" after running for Bingley in the Northern 12-Stage at Leeds three days earlier, Devine was surprised to find 21-year-old Mark Moore of Pudsey Pacers blasting into an early lead clearly intent on taking the 'Egg Stage' prize and the not inconsiderable kudos of relieving Holmes of one of his many records.

By Grinning Stone, Moore had opened a 10m lead over Devine, but as they approached the 'Egg Stage' marker, Moore appeared to be treading water allowing Devine to sweep past and take the honours by just one second. Bingley's Robin Lawrence passed through in third, a further two seconds back as Moore, 16th in the

opener the previous week, paid for his over-exuberance and faded to 23rd.

Bradford's Steve Oldfield (Gary's uncle) finished first veteran in third breaking his own year-old M40 record of 18:28 (which he equalled the previous week) by eight seconds.

Bingley's Max Brear also set new figures in the junior race (U16) taking 26 seconds off Matthew Drake's (Calder Valley) two-year-old record of 19:10. Brear, who turned 16 in March (and therefore under FRA rules still qualifies for U16 competitions) was delighted with his first race on the fells as he finished 11th overall. Brear has also shown considerable promise on the track and country having clocked 4:19 for 1500m and placed 53rd (in the U17 race) in the English Schools' Cross Country Championships at Newark on March 1.

Carol Greenwood was a convincing winner of the women's race. Greenwood placed 50th overall from a 210-strong field - the second highest number in the event's seven-year history after last week's record turnout of 273.

Emma O'Shea of Leeds was second just over half a minute adrift as Kath Drake, in third, sliced 26 seconds of Jean Rawlinson's three-year-old vets' record of 21:53.

April 15 BUNNY RUN THREE

Ian Holmes showed impressive leg speed as he chipped four seconds off Greg Hull's year-old course record of 16:47 in a furious solo sprint for the line.

The 31-year-old Bingley Harrier emphasised just how difficult it will be for anyone to stop him taking the major honours this season as he stormed to victory taking the 'Egg Stage' prize en-route (for a record 10th time), finishing just four seconds down on his year-old record of 3:24.

Keighley Road Runners' Liam Spencer made an early bid for glory as he blasted clear from the gun with the clear intention of going for the 'Egg Stage' record. Spencer wasn't able to shake off Holmes, however, and had to battle for a tie for second (with eventual runner-up Gary Devine) four seconds back. Spencer's challenge faded dramatically as he slipped back to 79th place in 21:41.

Holmes, however, was in irrepressible mood and, with the support of a huge crowd near the finish and race organiser Dave Woodhead counting him down in the final 100m, the Bingley man made sure of the record with a dip at the line to regain the mark he last set in 1995, which at the time was 17:03.

Devine, the 1990 British champion, finished just over half a minute adrift in an identical time to the previous week's race - 17:15, which he won in Holmes' absence - to make it a first, second and a third place in the three races. Holmes, with two victories (best three to count), remains favourite to secure the overall title with one race remaining.

Anne Buckley, 13th in last year's World Trophy, claimed victory as she held off Carol Greenwood to place 41st overall - a further indication of the quality of the field.

Buckley, who won the fourth race in last year's series (in 22:00), ran considerably faster this time round, however the cool, blustery conditions ensured Lucy Wright's year-old mark of 19:16 remained out of reach.

April 22 BUNNY RUN FOUR

Robin Lawrence declared himself a surprised winner of the final race in the series.

With Ian Holmes, winner of two races thus far, Andy Peace and Gary Devine, the winner of race two, all opting to watch from the sidelines, Lawrence labelled Clayton's Mark Horrocks as pre-race favourite.

But after finding himself in second behind Horrocks in the early stages, he moved to the front on the slight climb before the 'Egg-Stage' marker to take the en-route award by four seconds from Rochdale's Dale Wilkin-son.

"After that I consciously slowed down, especially on the descents," said Lawrence. "I wanted the others to catch up because I prefer to race in a group rather than be out on a limb.

"Anne Buckley (Lawrence's girlfriend) shouted to me 'You're going to have to work now if you want to win!' which is what I did and with 150m to go, I knew it was mine."

Andrew Preedy, also a triathlete, of Rossendale finished second, two seconds clear of Pudsey Pacers' Mark Moore whose improvement over the four races has seen him finish 16th, 23rd, 9th and now third! Devine secured the overall title from Bradford postman Gary Oldfield who, had he run and won, would have tied for first prize.

Peter Carr, who sealed the M50 title with victories in all four races, produced a stunning performance over such a short distance, especially as he is in heavy training for an attempt on the Bob Graham Round this summer.

Carol Greenwood produced her second win of the series and with two second place finishes (behind Victoria Wilkinson and Anne Buckley) comfortably secured the overall title from Spenborough's Kath Drake, second on the night.

The 31-year-old two-times English champion was 47th among 194 finishers which, although the smallest field of the series, is still the fifth largest turnout in its seven-year history.

April 29 BUNNY RUN RELAY

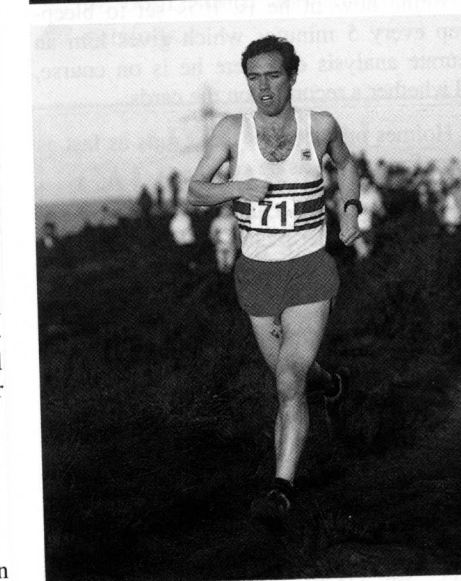
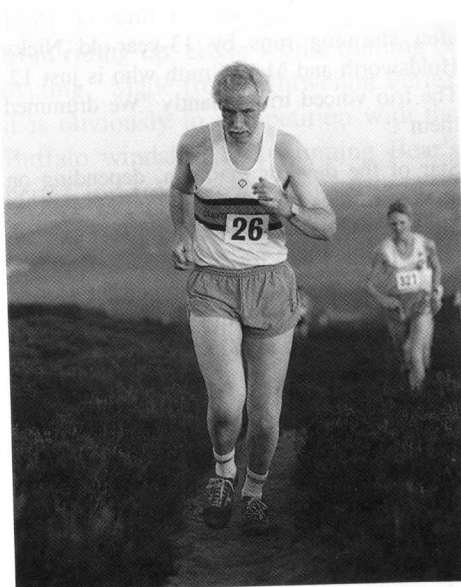
Pudsey & Bramley scored double victories in the inaugural running of this event.

The West Yorkshire outfit's victory in the men's race was pretty much straight for-

ward with their three-man team claiming the fastest times of the evening.

Steve Neill set them on their way on leg one in 13:31 to hand over to Shane Green (13:25) with former British champion Gary Devine, in the day's best time of 13:07, bringing

(continued overleaf)



Bunny Run stalwarts - top to bottom - Jim Whalley (Clem); Anne Jebb (Bingley); Gary Oldfield (Bradford Airedale)

Photos: Peter Hartley

Pudsey home over a minute clear of Pudsey Dale.

Holmfirth U16s were delighted to beat Holmfirth A (all seniors) by three places as they finished an impressive 10th overall.

Gareth Johns, 14, the oldest runner in the team, brought Holmfirth home well clear on the anchor leg with a time of 15:51 after storming runs by 13-year-old Nicky Holdsworth and Mark Smith who is just 12. The trio voiced triumphantly "We drummed them"!

Star of the day (or madman, depending on how you look at it!) was Pudsey Pacers' Mick Lolley who ran all three legs. He opened with 17:54 for 20th place overall and followed that up with a somewhat slower 19:16 (to remain in 20th spot) before feeling the pace on the last leg (19:30) and slip back a further five places to 25th from 28 teams who finished.

Anne Buckley produced arguably the run of the day on leg one as she came home in sixth overall with the day's fastest clocking (14:43) to set Pudsey on their way to a comprehensive victory.

Buckley handed over to 21 year old Helen Purdey, the 1996 British Isles Ironman Triathlon silver medallist (competing in her shortest race ever) before Jane Clark brought Pudsey home in eighth on the final leg in the second quickest time of the evening (15:25).

Two days after winning the 23.5 mile Three Peaks Race, Carol Greenwood helped the mixed 'Mad Hatters' team to sixth with the third best time of the day (15:46).

The reason behind the relays was that this year April had five Tuesdays. The race route was basically run over the long Bunny lap of the moor.

A Tactic Eggsclusive

Over 40 series winner, Steve Oldfield uses his count-down facility on his stopwatch to determine how fit he is. It is set to bleep-bleep every 5 minutes which gives him an accurate analysis of where he is on course, and whether a record is on the cards.

Ian Holmes on the other hand runs as fast as he can for as long as he can!

The question begs - can the record go?

We give the former record holder, Greg Hull the final word, "these legs are build for speed, I'll be back next year to reduce it to 16.30.". Good luck Greg but Holmes might have a say in that!

FACTS AND FIGURES

Cadbury's Creme Egg Weight = 150K calories

Basically 1 ½ = 150K calories.

Total quality of chocolate eggs prizes in series = 130 Kilo. Now that's a lot of running!

Runny Egg/Gareth Webb

Full results in centre section