

# Giant rabbit has commuters puzzled in bid to dig up charity interest



## 'I only go to work for the bunny'

THERE'S something bunny happening on the streets of Doncaster!

A six-foot rabbit has been turning heads as it hop-foots into Bentley through Sprotbrough with the rush hour commuters.

With umbrella and briefcase in hands, he has been making the street look like something from a cartoon.

But today The Star can reveal the real identity of Sprotbrough's answer to Bugs Bunny - it's company director James Squires.

James is donning the costume every day this week to get ready for his role in a charity event later this year.

He is one of the organisers behind the Doncaster Bunny Run, which is due to take place in April to raise money for the South Yorkshire based children's charity Safe@last.

He has been sighted on Sprotbrough Road, York Road and Bentley Road during morning rush hour on his way to his job as managing director of Austin Banks Recruitment, three miles from his home in Sprotbrough.

He will be wearing the costume for the Bunny Run on Saturday April 3. He also has promises that Doncaster Rovers mascot Donny Dog will join him, along with the 90s pop icon Jive Bunny. He does not expect having the dog so close to so many rabbits will cause any problems!

He said: "I was browsing the web looking for a bunny suit when the idea came to me. I thought people would notice a bunny carrying a briefcase and walking to work, particularly if the spectacle was repeated each day."

"I picked rush hour for obvi-

DAVID KESSEN  
News Reporter



After ego: James Squires

ous reasons and I knew there would be a lot of traffic on my route. The public have been showing their support by pipping horns and cheering me on.

"The only problem was when I went past a dog, it went ballistic. Fortunately it was in a van!

"My son, Joe, who's five, thinks it's great. He chased after me along Melton Road when I set off on Monday morning. He's going to take part in the Bunny Run to, and so is my other son, Fraser, who's one, and my fiancée, Louise Selfe."

"I think doing the walk for a week will be enough. Any more and I think I will start eating to many carrots, or people will start throwing carrots at me."

Up to 500 participants, dressed as bunnies will complete in the one mile Bunny run, at Town Fields. It was inspired by the Aurora Centre's

Christmas Santa Dash, and is intended to have an Easter feel.

It will aid Safe@last, which works to help children and young people who are at risk through running away.

It aims to intervene to protect them from what they are potentially running towards and what they are running away from.

The service was set up in 1998 to support the one in nine children in South Yorkshire that are affected.

Since 2005, the charity has worked with over 4,000 young people and provides the only secure refuge outside London for under 16 year olds.

The Bunny Run has the support of Kevin Gosden, whose son Andrew has not been seen since he left home two years ago.

Kevin has worked ever since to try to trace him.

The proceeds from the Bunny Run will be used to help Safe@last launch a preventative education programme in Doncaster - it has already been successfully rolled out in Rotherham.

They need about £15,000 to get it off the ground.

A key part of the education work is the promotion of the charity's 24-hour helpline number at local schools - a confidential service which allows young people to discuss their problems and where appropriate access a trained project worker to help them resolve their issue around running away.

For more information on Doncaster's first Bunny Run and to reserve your place, visit [www.doncasterbunnyrun.co.uk](http://www.doncasterbunnyrun.co.uk) or contact James Squires at Austin Banks Ltd on 01302 822 228.

### News in Brief

#### Delays due to A1 roadworks

ROADWORKS are expected to cause delays for motorists using the A1(M) near Doncaster over the next couple of weeks.

Moderate delays are expected at Junction 37 at Marr because of bridge works, with the north and southbound exit sliproads closed between 10pm and 6am until March 13. Diversions will operate via Junction 36.

Drainage works are expected to cause slight delays between Blyth and Wadworth. There will be various lane closures on the southbound carriageway from Friday until March 11 between 9pm and 5am.

#### Day of prayer

THE annual Women's World Day of Prayer is being celebrated at St Mary's Church, Tickhill, on Friday from 2pm and is open to men and women. The theme of this year's service has been chosen by the women of Cameroon.

#### HotHouse play

DONCASTER'S HotHouse Festival gets under way this evening with the first performance of Beauty and the Beast at Doncaster Civic Theatre from 7.15pm. Tickets are £12 and £10.

#### Sanctuary AGM

MAYFLOWER Animal Sanctuary at Bawtry holds its annual general meeting on Friday March 5 at the Crown Hotel, with members reminded fees need to be renewed at the end of the month.

#### Police meeting

A MEETING will be held in Kexbrough on Wednesday for residents to raise issues of concern with their local police officers. The event is to be held in the Priestley Avenue Community Centre at 3pm.

#### New number

AGE Concern in Barnsley has a new telephone number. The organisation runs a home safety and handyman service, shopping delivery service, hospital aftercare, a befriending service, adult classes and luncheon clubs. Its offices on Queen's Road, Barnsley, can be contacted on 01226 776820.

#### Charity hike

PUT your best foot forward and take part in a spring charity hike to raise money for Marie Curie Cancer Care. Registration is now open for the charity's annual Peak District Ramble around Edale. Call 0114 2793010 to register.

#### Violin at lunch

VIOLINIST Miles Brett has been invited to perform for Sunday lunch diners at Walkers Garden Coffee Room, Blaxton, on March 7

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Ministry of bunny walks: Doncaster's biggest rabbit on his daily commute. Picture: Steve Taylor