



# The race is on!

## Towns set for terrific spectacle of Tour of Britain cycling event

by Alison Stephenson

**SPEEDING** cycles among a sea of Union flags — that's what Okehampton and Hatherleigh will look like when the penultimate leg of the Tour of Britain cycle race hits the streets in two weeks' time.

There will be huge

excitement as the adrenaline-charged spectacle comes to town on Friday, September 18 and the mayor is urging everyone to join in with cheering and flag waving as Okehampton takes centre stage in the prestigious race.

Okehampton Town Council has sent letters to the college and

primary school, inviting children to line the route where 100 cyclists will race through at speeds of up to 40mph in stage seven of the UK tour, which will be televised nationally and globally.

Town mayor David Weekes said: 'It's going to be exciting to see something like this.'

'We are hoping for a really big turnout to encourage the cyclists.'

'It's great for the town have a national event here and Devon as a whole and it will be good for the cycling industry here.'

The race will start in Hatherleigh which is a stop-off point for the cyclists and their entourage and is believed to be the smallest place from where a tour stage has ever started.

There will be plenty of pre-race entertainment, including trial biker

Andrei Burton jumping the famous tar barrels and a mini carnival procession with a special crepe paper float featuring a three-metre high racing bike by the boys and girls of Hatherleigh Carnival.

Bridge Street is likely to be closed until midday. A route around the north and east of the town will be open. Hatherleigh is preparing for more than 2,000 spectators.

The race starts by the sheep sculpture at 10.15am and riders will go down Bridge Street, over the bridge and then towards Okehampton.

Traffic flow will be stopped for a short time in Okehampton as the race passes through the town and police are anticipating another big crowd.

Sgt Mark Hoar said: 'We are expecting a lot of public interest,

especially after British riders did so well in this year's Tour de France. Some of those riders will be taking part in this event, and are expected to do well.'

'We are anticipating a large crowd turning out to watch and cheer the riders on.'

The race will come into Okehampton from the A386 at Elmead Cross, down Upcott Hill, then through Market Street, into Fore Street, East Street, Exeter Road and then turning into Barton Road, Crediton Road and on to Bow on the B3215. It will take less than five minutes for the whole race and entourage to pass through.

'Obviously, these are professional racers and will be cycling at anything up to 40mph in places,' said the officer.

'With a hundred of

them the only safe way to get them through the town is to stop all the traffic and then clear the roads completely.

'If anyone has ever seen the Tour de France live or on TV they will see that this is what the French authorities do. It makes sense to follow a similar policy, given the French police's experience.'

At 10am on the day all traffic will be stopped on the route and directed off it until all the participants and support vehicles have gone through. Sgt Hoar said it would take about 20 police staff to do this, and the co-operation of local motorists was vital.

'The whole race is broadcast live on TV and this is perfect for showcasing Okehampton again,' he said.

'I am sure it will bring trade into the town and

will serve to raise the profile of the town.

'I know this will cause some people some inconvenience, but it is going to happen, and we intend to make sure it goes smoothly and with no risk to the public, motorists or the riders themselves.'

If anyone requires further information regarding the policing of the race, contact Sgt Mark Hoar at Okehampton Police Station.

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## Family farm's meat a cut above the rest at awards

IT'S all smiles for one husband-and-wife team, who won five awards for the meat products they entered in the prestigious Taste of the West Food and Drink Awards 2009.

Jane Barber and Simon Kemp, who run a family farm of 193 acres in North Tawton, along with Jane's children, Callum, 13, and Ella, 11 (pictured), specialise in traditional British rare breeds.

Jane took over Lovaton Farm from her father in 1999 and went on to train in butchery skills. She prepared all the Lovaton meat at the farm and now works with a highly experienced butcher in the on-farm cutting room.

Jane said: 'We are really delighted to have won an award for every one of our beef, pork and lamb products entered in the Taste of the West



Awards this year.

'We believe this is a testament to the consistent high quality and delicious taste of our meat.'

The livestock, which is all traditionally reared, includes 115 Dexter and Dexter X Devon cattle.

The award-winning

meats this year

included a Dexter X Devon rib of beef, which won gold, a Dexter X Devon sirloin steak and a Lleyn lamb rolled loin, both of which picked up silver and a Lleyn lamb valentine steak and Gloucester Old Spot leg of pork, which both

won bronze medals.

Lovaton Farm has entered the Taste of the West awards every year since 2006. The competition attracts entries from thousands of top producers across Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire and Gloucester.

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