



LAUNCH: The first stage of The Women's Tour will end in Northampton

World class race in town

BY STEVE SCOLES

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The Northamptonshire route of the first ever UK Women's Tour cycling race was announced today.

The event sees five days of world class cycling coming to the area in May, with the first two legs on May 7 and May 8, largely featuring Northamptonshire.

County Councillor Heather Smith said: "The fact that we have got the Grand Depart of the very first Women's Tour in Northamptonshire is such a privilege for us."

The race starts in Oundle and heads west through the county taking in Lyveden New Bield and Brigstock, reaching Grafton Underwood then continuing west to Desborough before heading south past the A14, Lamport and Brixworth. It heads to Spratton then south to Chapel Brampton, west to Church Brampton, through the Bringtons and then south east towards Duston. It goes south past the M1 before skirting round the southern edge of Northampton and

heading into the town centre via the Bedford Road.

Children's events are planned in Beckett's Park for the day and the first leg will finish in Northampton town centre.

Joining the already confirmed reigning World and Olympic road race champion Marianne Vos and her Rabo Liv team will be the Wiggle Honda team of British Olympic track champions Laura Trott, Joanna Rowsell and Dani King. Alongside them will be the national side of the world's number one ranked nation, the Netherlands, plus a Great Britain national team led by Leicestershire's Lucy Garner.

British domestic team Matrix Fitness - Vulpine also earn an invite for the first ever UCI level stage race for women to take place in the UK, organised by SweetSpot Group, while UnitedHealthcare Pro Cycling's participation will mean Hannah Barnes racing in her home county of Northamptonshire on the opening day of The Women's Tour.

Keep checking our website for more news on the tour as it approaches.



WOW

Women On Wheels

22March – 1 June 2014

Northampton Museum & Art Gallery

On the 7th May Northamptonshire will host the first stage of the inaugural Women's Cycling Tour.



To coincide with this important event we are presenting **WOW** – Women on Wheels. An exciting new exhibition that celebrates the UK's recent international successes in women's cycling and helps visitors understand how the cyclists achieve such fantastic performances.

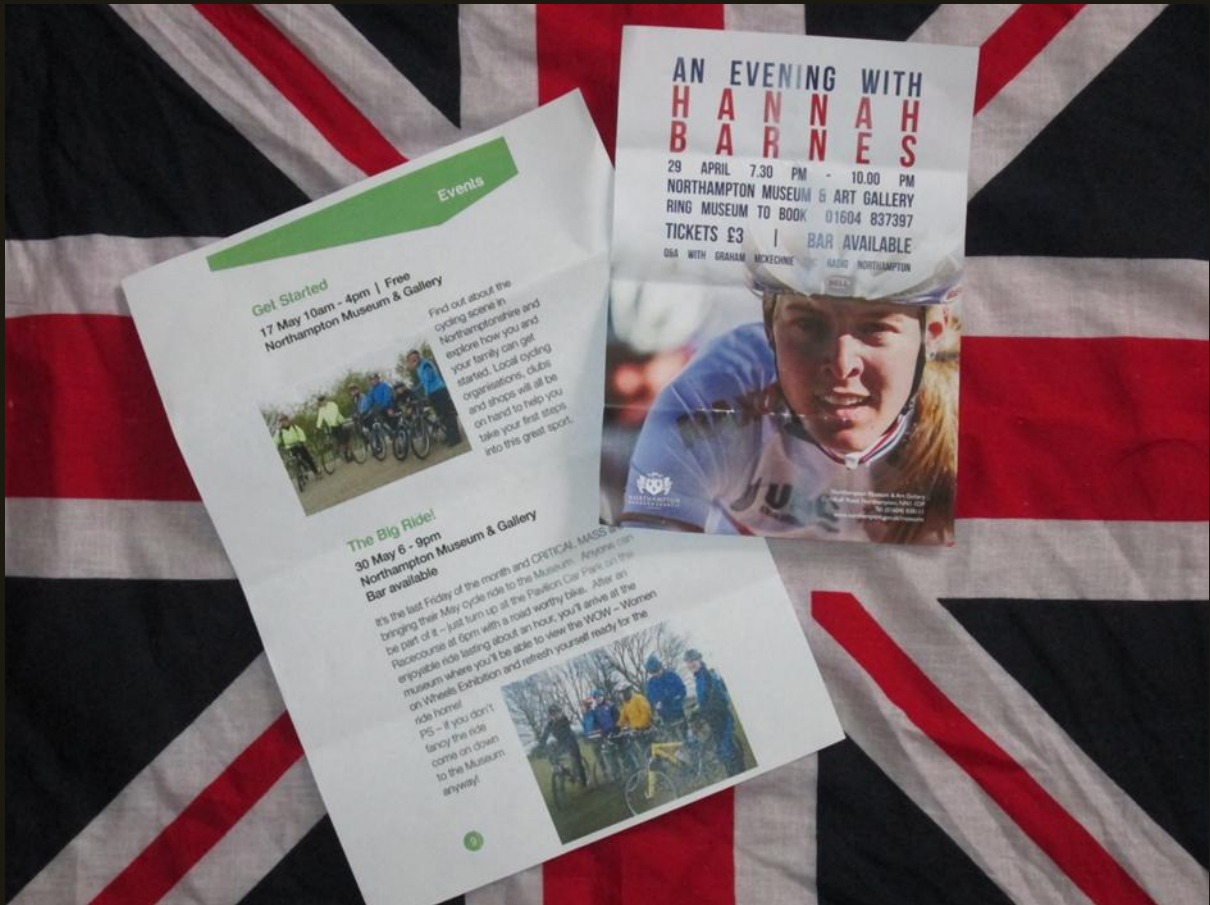
Presented with support from British Cycling, leading professional cyclists and local enthusiasts, this exhibition is designed to inform and inspire all who see it.



CTC Northampton had a display at this exhibition and a stall on the Cycling information day.



Philip Gray set up a stall for the CTC alongside Katie from the Breeze group and Natalie from Joyride cycles.





Cycling RIDES

BRITAIN'S BEST ROUTES



"WE'VE GOT SOME NICE COUNTRYSIDE AROUND TOWCESTER TO TRAIN IN, AND IT'S EASY TO TRAVEL TO RACES FROM"

Northants & Bucks with Hannah Barnes



HANNAH BARNES TAKES time out from beating the cream of Britain's Olympians to offer *Chris Sidwells* a comprehensive look at her favourite training ride, and her hopes for the future

You could be forgiven for thinking that Hannah Barnes slightly spoiled the party when she won the IG London Nocturne recently. The highlights were televised the next weekend and Olympic double gold medalist Laura Trott, who was born close enough to be called a Londoner, together with her

pursuit gold team-mates from London 2012, Joanna Rowsell and Dani King, were in the field.

In a close sprint at the end with Hannah Barnes it looked like Trott could have won. Well, some thought so. Barnes didn't, so she celebrated. The finish line photograph agreed with her, but the organisers said she was relegated for dangerous riding when she celebrated. Barnes

WHERE TO?
A two and a bit hour ride in rolling countryside

remained dignified and the photograph together with public opinion won the day and the decision was reversed.

Barnes won, just like she's been winning all year. She won a round of the women's road series, the Curlew Cup in Northumberland, a few days before this ride. Yet although the *Daily Telegraph* recently called her "the fastest cyclist you've probably ever heard of" we shouldn't be surprised that she's winning big races at 20. It's natural progression for someone who started out as

"It's just progression that I'm winning races here this year"

near here then further afield to Cannock and to the Surrey Hills — anything to avoid the turbo. I went to Majorca for 10 days, too, and had a week in Spain in March. It was a good winter's training and I'm feeling the benefit of it now."

Barnes is one of the best, if not the best, female criterium racer in the UK now. As well as the Smithfield Nocturne, she won the National Circuit Race Championships in York this weekend (the third time she has won the title) and dominated the women's Tour Series this spring. Barnes also excelled in the fast racing environment of Holland. Yet at the start of 2013 she didn't even have a team.

MG-Maxifuel to the rescue

"My Dutch team was Team Ibis, but their main sponsor pulled out at the last minute. All the UCI registered teams were full, but luckily MG-Maxifuel came to my rescue. And it's been good racing here for them. The women's Tour Series, the Johnson Health GP, is great and I rate my best ever win as the Smithfield Nocturne, but I want to race in Europe again. It's the best place for women's cycling; it's more part of the culture there. You're more likely to progress there, too," Barnes says.

She's right. Barnes is a road racer with a fearsome sprint and she wants to progress to world level in that branch of the sport. "I'd like to represent my country as an elite rider," she says. When I ask what her dream victory would be if a magic wand could be waved, she says: "The World Road Race Championships or the Olympic road race. I don't know which to say."

To keep improving Barnes has to go back to living in Holland, or maybe in Belgium, and race for a bigger team. For now though she's enjoying racing in the UK and training on familiar roads. Today's ride is a regular, and her cousin Emily Barnes has travelled up from Surrey to join her. Emily

is 18 but the Barnes family genes have already helped her build a reputation as a winner on the track, road and in cyclo-cross.

The two women head north-west at first, running level with the A5. Then they head off towards Oxfordshire, one of the places where Kent-born Hannah once lived. "My dad's a farmer so we've moved a bit with where he was working," she explains.

Hannah's parents were both cyclists — "So I got into it



INFOTAINMENT

Hannah Barnes

Age: 20

Lives: Towcester, Northamptonshire

Team: MG-Maxifuel

National titles: Two elite circuit race, one Madison, two junior track, one junior time trial and one junior cyclo-cross

65km
Ride distance

an under-14 national omnium champion, just like Trott did.

Natural progression

"I was on the Talent Team until I was 16, then the Olympic Development Programme. There isn't a women's under-23 academy so I went to Holland to race, and you get a bit lost to everyone here when you do that. So this year it looks like I've made a big jump, but I haven't, not really. It's just progression that I'm winning races here this year," Barnes tells me when we meet at her home in Towcester.

"I had a very good winter, though," she continues. "I did a lot of mountain biking because of the weather, which I think has made me stronger this year. I went all over the place to ride off-road. To Woburn Woods

The Barneses are a cycling family through and through



the evening. On Thursdays I race at the Milton Keynes Bowl. Then Friday and Saturday is easy with a race on Sunday."

The ride reaches a southerly turnaround near Buckingham, from where Hannah and Emily head north past Stowe House and the Silverstone racetrack.

Now Barnes has won the national circuit race title, her priority will be a bigger team so she can progress. As she says, "If I don't win here in the UK I'm disappointed, but sometimes over in Europe I'm just happy if I finish. It's another level, but racing there is the only way to progress on the road from where I am now."

550m
Total climbing

because we thought it would be a good idea if we all had the same hobby," she says. Hannah's younger sister, Alice, is also a top racer with titles and national medals.

Unlike any man racing at her level, Hannah Barnes has to work part time as a waitress at Whittlebury Hall Hotel, but she says: "They are OK with me racing and just let me work when I need the money." It means she has to squeeze her training around work, which isn't so bad, but working on her feet can compromise her recovery time.

NEXT WEEK

David Clarke rides Cycling Weekly's Malvern Mad Hatter sportive route

Training load

A typical week's training now in the summer is: "Monday is my rest day. Tuesday I do two hours. Wednesday is a big one, four hours in the morning with a group of guys then two to three hours in



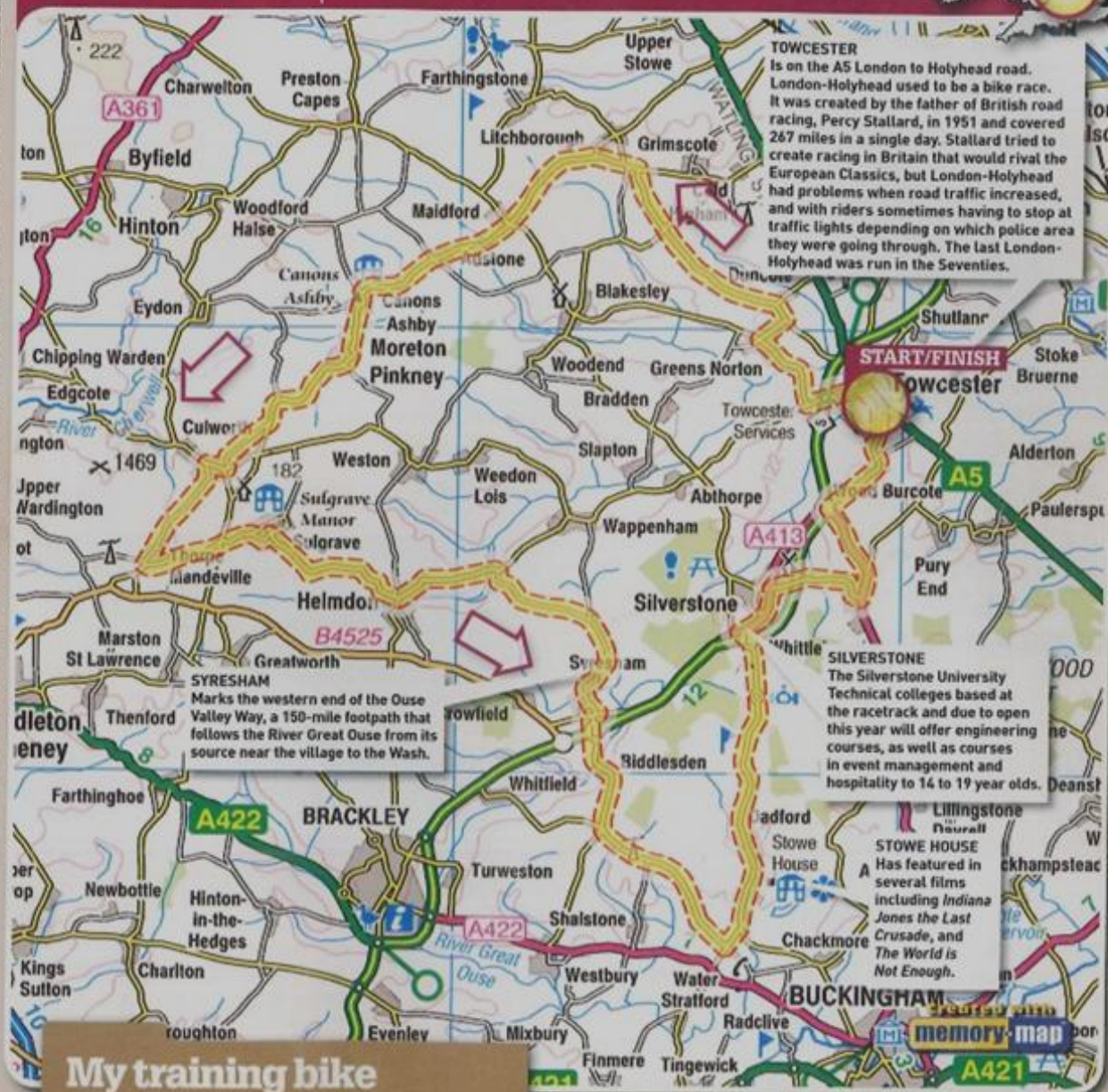
Training certainly has its ups and downs

Cycling in Northamptonshire

There are some useful hints, information and maps on the highways section of the local government site; www.northamptonshire.gov.uk. The county celebrates a summer of cycling in 2013, details of events, including the Silverstone 24-hour bike race can be found at tinyurl.com/nqcf8w.

The Northants Cycle Race Association has a long and very active history of race promotion in the county, while CTC Northampton (www.ctc-northampton.org.uk) is a very active branch of the national cyclists' organisation.

For families with young kids, Stanwick Lakes near Thrapston has seven miles of easy off-road trails with cycle hire available. got to www.stanwicklakes.org.uk for more information.



TOWCESTER
Is on the A5 London to Holyhead road. London-Holyhead used to be a bike race. It was created by the father of British road racing, Percy Stallard, in 1951 and covered 267 miles in a single day. Stallard tried to create racing in Britain that would rival the European Classics, but London-Holyhead had problems when road traffic increased, and with riders sometimes having to stop at traffic lights depending on which police area they were going through. The last London-Holyhead was run in the Seventies.

SYRESHAM
Marks the western end of the Ouse Valley Way, a 150-mile footpath that follows the River Great Ouse from its source near the village to the Wash.

SILVERSTONE
The Silverstone University Technical colleges based at the racetrack and due to open this year will offer engineering courses, as well as courses in event management and hospitality to 14 to 19 year olds.

STOWE HOUSE
Has featured in several films including *Indiana Jones the Last Crusade*, and *The World is Not Enough*.

My training bike

Hannah Barnes rode her Wyndy Milla Massive Attack team bike, equipped with Dura Ace Di2 and USE handlebars, stem and carbon wheels. The way she handles this bike in close-quarter battles around the streets of Britain should be testament enough to its robust racing qualities.



Training route

Head west from the town centre towards Helmdon then take the first right after crossing the A43 bridge. Turn right in Greens Norton then first left to Litchborough, then continue south-west through Adstone, Moreton Pinkney and Culworth to Thorpe Mandeville. Turn left to Sulgrave then right to go through Helmdon to Syresham. Continue south over the A43, keep left then turn left to Silverstone. Turn right on the A413 then first right over the A43 then left on the A413. Turn right to Wood Burcote and follow this road back to Towcester.



Ordnance Survey mapping © Crown copyright, 2012/13. Created with Memory-Map



BEST BRIT: Leukaemia sufferer Paul Ashby from Northants hands Hannah Barnes the Best British Rider jersey

Fitting end to thrilling first stage

BY NICHOLAS BIEBER
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The Women's Tour got off to a dream start yesterday as thousands of spectators in Northampton town centre witnessed local rider Hannah Barnes cross the finish line in third place.

The winner was Sweden's Emma Johansson, of Orica-AIS, who was shortly followed in second place by World Champion Marianne Vos, of Rabobank-liv.

Not only did Barnes, of United-Healthcare, finish third, but she also bagged the Best Young Rider's jersey and Best British Riders jersey.

The 21-year-old, of Towcester, said: "I've been nervous since I knew we were coming to the race, so to get Stage One out of the way is great.

"I didn't expect to be in third place, so to do that and win two jerseys is great - it was one of my best-ever results.

Barnes, who was one of 96

riders in the race, was greeted by hordes of fans all along the 93.8km route in Northamptonshire.

The route saw cyclists ride through the picturesque county, passing Boughton House and Althorp House.

Barnes added: "The roads in Northamptonshire were great and everyone was out there cheering - the crowds were absolutely amazing.

Barnes' UHC teammate Sharon Laws took the race's first Strava Queen of the Mountains jersey, while the Sprints jersey was awarded to Johansson.

She said: "Winning the first stage feels great. I haven't got good memories of riding in England, but I made a good memory today."

The second stage runs from Hinckley to Bedford via Brixworth. Following days are in Essex and Hertfordshire, with the final stage finishing in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.

Race report in sport, p46



More tour stories
 Go to www.northampton-news-np.co.uk



CTC Northampton lead a ride following Stage one of the Women Tour Route from Oundle to Northampton in 2014.



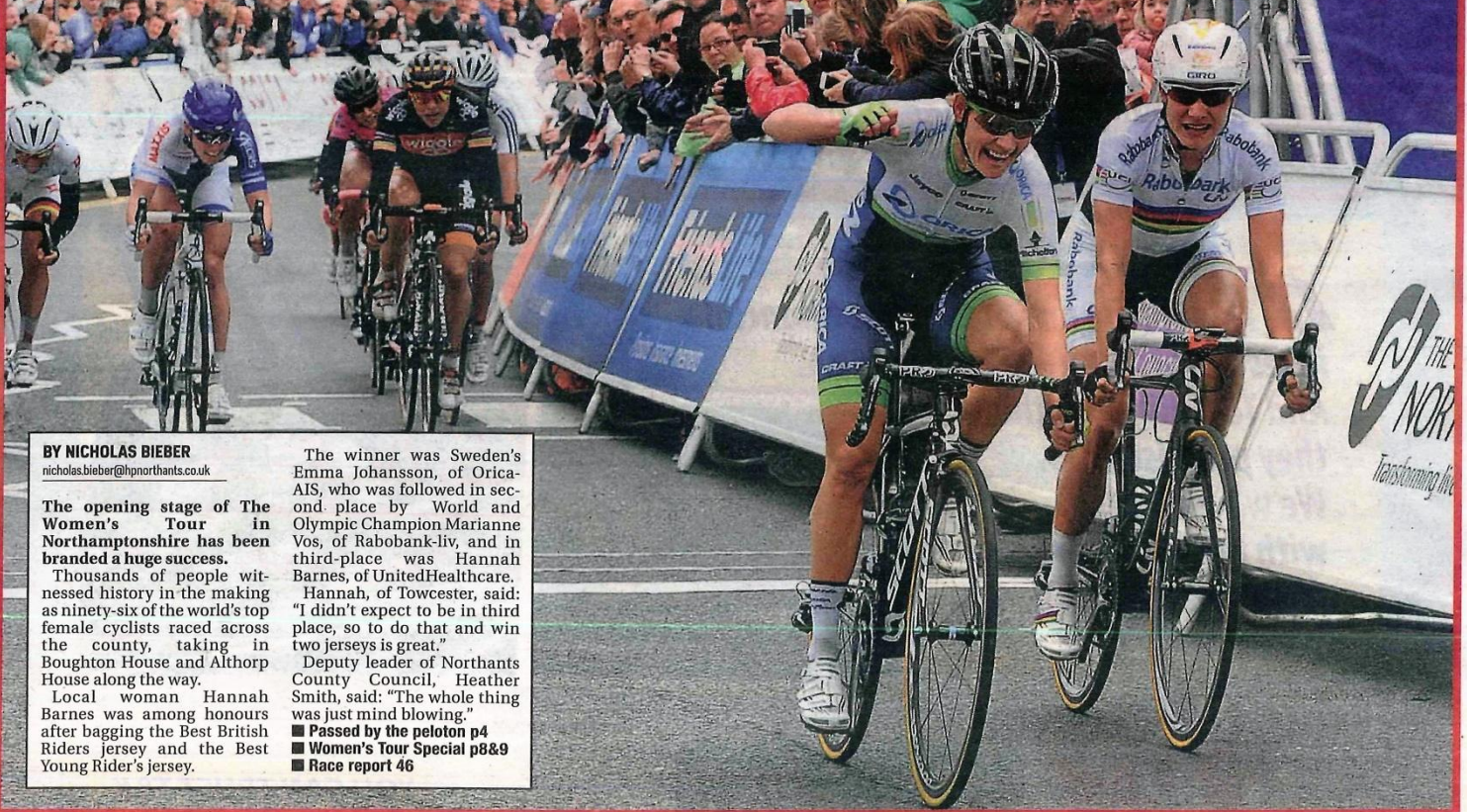


Winner of Stage One, Emma Johansson, Northampton 2014

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TOUR-RIFFIC!



BY NICHOLAS BIBER
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The opening stage of The Women's Tour in Northamptonshire has been branded a huge success.

Thousands of people witnessed history in the making as ninety-six of the world's top female cyclists raced across the county, taking in Boughton House and Althorp House along the way.

Local woman Hannah Barnes was among honours after bagging the Best British Riders jersey and the Best Young Rider's jersey.

The winner was Sweden's Emma Johansson, of Orica-AIS, who was followed in second place by World and Olympic Champion Marianne Vos, of Rabobank-liv, and in third-place was Hannah Barnes, of UnitedHealthcare.

Hannah, of Towcester, said: "I didn't expect to be in third place, so to do that and win two jerseys is great."

Deputy leader of Northants County Council, Heather Smith, said: "The whole thing was just mind blowing."

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Johansson seals stage after bunch sprint

CYCLING

Sweden's Emma Johansson became the first stage winner of The Women's Tour in history after winning the inaugural first stage from Oundle to Northampton yesterday.

The Orica-AIS rider triumphed after a bunch sprint to take the yellow jersey and an early overall lead in the first edition of the race.

Dutch Olympic champion Marianne Vos was second for Rabobank-liv after just being edged out while there was local interest in the top three thanks to Northamptonshire's Hannah Barnes coming third.

Britain's Olympic silver medal-

ist Lizzie Armistead was eighth with compatriot Lucy Garner sixth, meaning there are three homegrown riders in the top ten.

Elise Delzenne of France attempted a breakaway from the peloton 29km from the line but this attack - which opened up a 45 second gap at one stage - was reeled in to set up the sprint finish in the town centre.

Johansson, pictured, also leads the points classification while Britain's Sharon Laws heads the mountain standings after collecting nine points from the two climbing sections at Harrington and Spratton.

Twenty-one-year-old Barnes became the first to wear the

young rider's jersey while Specialized Lululemon lead the team table.

"It feels great, I don't have great memories of racing in England but this was great," said Johansson.

"It was a long sprint into a head wind. I know Lizzie was going to be up there and Marianne so I was watching them but the crowds were crazy and it helped.

"I did get a bit scared as I was not used to it and thought it may be a crash but they were just excited."

The Tour continues today (Thursday) with stage two from Hinckley to Bedford and finishes on May 11 with a leg from Harwich to Bury St Edmunds.



The Women's Tour 2014



Cycling-fever erupts in Oundle

BY NICHOLAS BIEBER
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Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson made history in Oundle yesterday after officially starting the UK's first international women's cycling stage-race.

Thousands of people lined the streets to witness the big event, as Baroness Grey-Thompson dropped the Union Jack flag for 96 cyclists to head off, lap the town, and race off towards Northampton town centre.

The experience left deputy leader of Northamptonshire County Council, Heather Smith, feeling emotional. She said: "This is really



going to put the county on the map and let people know where Northamptonshire is, what we've got to offer, how beautiful it is, and how we have been able to show that we can start something so

historic within our county. I'm absolutely thrilled to bits."

Baroness Grey-Thompson said: "I never expected this many people to turn out. It has been amazing."