

Riding high

□ There was a great buzz in the air as the riders from the London to Paris (L2P) Cycle Tour training camp relaxed in the open air bar of Club Tarahal after the Ride the Volcano event.



Domingo Yáñez, Sven Thiele, Francisco Valero and Sari Metsola of Nexus and Sean Kelly (l-r)



Puerto's tourism councillor, Lorenzo Hernández, launched the event (centre)



155 locals joined the L2P group and organisers

The ride, held in honour of Irish Classics Race legend, Sean Kelly and sponsored by Nexus Inmobiliarias and cycling club Bicistar was a resounding success. Kelly, dubbed as the groups, "prankster" by L2P's founder and chairman Sven Thiele was accompanied on the day by 14 members of the L2P group and 155 local riders. Francisco Valero of Nexus confirmed that they were all, "very happy the way things

went" and smiled wryly as he confirmed that the original intention was to start out in a small way.

The ride covered 111 kilometres from Club Tarahal in Puerto de la Cruz to Santiago del Teide and back, 46 kilometres of climbing.

Sven praised the organisation carried out by Nexus, Bicistar and the local Cycling Federation, the work of the security forces who did a, "fantastic job" controlling the

being donated to a newcomer to the L2P beneficiaries this year, Christel House, a charity which helps children around the world break the cycle of poverty. L2P generates funds for a variety of international charities which concentrate mainly on children's education and self sufficiency.

Kelly won 193 professional victories, 33 wins in one year (1984), among which was the Tour of Spain in 1988 which staged some of the

early stages in Tenerife. Rating Teide as a, "difficult" climb, Kelly confirmed his pleasure at being back riding in the island and recommended it as a "perfect" training area for top cyclists, especially the Cañadas del Teide. His winning record is only topped by Eddy Merckx, his choice for all-time-great cyclist. "He won everything and he was always competing." The recent big names, Indurain and Armstrong for example, "trained all year for the Tour de France, but Merckx prepared and entered for everything", including the out of season indoor events.

Commenting on the drug scandals that have hit the sport in recent years, Kelly gave his opinion that cycling is over the worst and that the clubs themselves are "getting their act together" to clean up the sport. Without naming names, he claimed, "I feel that

other sports that we are not talking about the moment will be having a lot of bad publicity in the future".

The ride was part of the Winter Training Camp for the L2P race in July. It's the only event of its kind, based on the Tour de France with three days of racing over 600 kilometres.

Anyone can join in and the riders are treated as nearly as possible as professionals.

Thiele lauded the pleasures of Paris in the summer, claiming, "there's nothing better than riding into Paris and all the traffic is being stopped to let you go by, you do feel like a pro." Seven riders from Tenerife will be taking part in the event, keep an eye on our sport's pages for updates of their progress.

Discover Tenerife

□ A series of new guides and new routes have been announced for avid island explorers.

Tegueste has edited a new guide which describes seven routes covering some of the most representative spots in the borough such as Las Peñuelas, the Barranco Agua de Dios or the Camino El Monte. The guide is an easy to use aid for visitors to discover the farming hinterland. The routes are available on-line in Spanish on www.teguste.es.

La Orotava are set to cash in on the wonderful nightscapes of their moonlit and floodlit historical centre with guided routes through the old town. A local specialist will act as a guide and interpreter of the heritage of the area to those interested in appreciating the singularities and mysteries which can only be seen at night. The excursions take place until May and are free but would be walkers have to book a place with the cultural department of the town hall in advance, contact 922 333 644 or 922 333 299.

Lastly for those who like a tippie, there is a new list of routes within the Spanish wine routes programme, a project under the auspices of the tourism ministry in conjunction with the Spanish association of wine cities, ACEVIN. *Senderos Isleños del Vino* (Island Wine Routes) gives information on the quality of the product and is an alternative way of promoting the bodegas, restaurants, rural hotels etc. who have signed up for the scheme. The routes are a combination of various leisure activities such as ravine descents, climbing or whale watching with activities more directly tied to enotourism such as organised visits to vineyards, specialised shops or bodegas. For more information contact rutadelvina@yahoo.es or call 922 815 120, 661 326 251.

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