

## Kili Climb Report, Day 3 from the Mountain

Correspondent: Paul Francis

Filed: 7am Monday August 3, from Camp Barranco, 3950mASL\*



Good Morning from the wind-swept base of Mt Kilimanjaro, where it is absolutely beyond freezing. The wind is howling which means the chill factor is brutal, but apart from that, we've got glorious blue skies overhead and we are to tackle day 4 on the mountain.

Yesterday's climb was tough. Real tough. We walked for nine hours and ascended to 4600m before turning around and descending 700m to stay the night at Camp Barranco. Three or four of us were really struggling but everyone managed to make it back to camp even if some took 90 minutes longer than the others.

I've got to admit, you do feel a bit ripped off having gone up so high only to turn around and go back down the mountain, but it's the safest and best way for us to acclimatise to the altitude. The theory is "climb high, sleep low" and it does give us a better chance of summiting.

Today's climb is not as tough so hopefully the few of us who really struggled will be okay.

The highlight yesterday was Kelly Cartwright's return to camp. Kelly is 19 years old and one of the most outstanding young people I've ever met. She's got such a huge heart, and is so utterly selfless. She lost a leg to cancer when she was just 15, and in the years since, she's become a champion sprinter. But I reckon her greatest achievement is that she's a champion girl.

And so do our porters. About 140 of them gathered around and sang a special song to welcome her back to camp yesterday. It was just stunning, and so incredibly moving.

Typically, Kelly just beamed and couldn't believe that all the fuss was for her, but the fact that the porters wrote a song for her shows how impressive she is and how impressed they are by her courage, determination and spirit. They've seen hundreds of climbers take on Kili and they know gold when they see it.

Meanwhile, this morning in the mess tent, Kelly and the only other female climber, Penny Gerstle, quietly told me that they are doing their very best not to show us blokes up. I have to hand it to them; they are doing incredibly well. Kili isn't for wimps and these two are made of tough stuff.

The porters also had a special cake for the genius who came up with the idea to climb Mount Kilimanjaro – Joe Hockey. Joe turned 44 yesterday, and two days ago one of the porters went ahead to a little village on the mountain to have a cake made for him.

Last night, they led us in a version of Happy Birthday to Joe, and he was incredibly touched. Chuffed, was actually the word he used. We had already given him a card from his terrific family back in Sydney and the cake capped off a great day for him.

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Joe said it was one of the best birthdays he's ever had and what was special about this one is that it reminded him that some of the best things in life are about giving, not receiving.

Despite the difficulties of the climb – and trust me, there are many (have I mentioned the cold?) – we've been lucky that no one has been injured. Touch wood, it stays that way.

But this is no walk in the park.

Tonight we'll be at Camp Karanga – which is only 50m higher than where we are now, but that's still 50m closer to the summit, and hopefully, we're closer to our goal of raising \$2 million to buy life saving medical equipment for the kids wards in hospitals around Australia.

On that note, some of the climbers want to keep our Humptys mountain website open until December to give it a real shake. I think it's a great idea.

Now, I've got to get cracking. Camp is breaking and Kili is calling. Join us again tomorrow at [www.humptysmountain.com.au](http://www.humptysmountain.com.au) for another progress report as we get closer to the summit.

*Tutaonana.*

\*ASL – above sea level.