

**DATELINE:**

**Report from Barranco Camp, 3950m ASL, Mt Kilimanjaro**

**7a.m. Wednesday August 4, 2010**

**Day 5, Kili Climb 2010**

**Report by Paul Francis, Humpty's founder and Executive Chairman**



Many of you would be familiar with Holly Brisley from Dancing With the Stars, All Saints or Home and Away. She's a star of the small screen and over the past few days she's turned into a megastar in Humpty's eyes, too.

Today the 32-year-old is taking on the gruelling Barranco Wall on Day Five of the Humpty Dumpty Foundation's second Mt Kilimanjaro Climb – and she's been inspired by her little boy, Levi Harper, who is back home in Sydney. As a father of three young girls, I know what a huge sacrifice it is to be away from your little ones for a couple of weeks – I did it last year and it nearly killed me. So I reckon it must be all that much harder for a first-time mum like Holly, who left Australia just a week after Levi celebrated his first birthday.

Holly, who gave birth at Royal North Shore Private Hospital in July 2009, is like her fellow climbers – they decided to make the sacrifice and be away from family and friends to help sick and injured kids in hospitals around Australia. "Every child deserves life; every parent deserves to watch their child smile, grow and flourish while living a full happy life," she said while in training for her first ever mountain climb a few weeks ago.

Well, I am happy to report that Holly's dedication and training has paid off. She's on target to raise \$50,000 for the climb and she's not going to let a minor (kidding!) challenge like the extraordinarily steep and rocky Barranco Wall get in her way. "Even though we are going through something really challenging, we are still managing to laugh along the way," she told me shortly after 6am Kili Time today.

Trust me, she'll need to rely on that sense of humour throughout the day. When Michele Rosengren from Adventure1000 told me the team was starting off earlier than usual – 7am instead of 8am – to beat the rush at Barranco, I remembered just how tough that part of the climb is. That's not to say there aren't going to be other tougher bits ahead – like the summit – but Barranco really is very steep – safe, but steep – and the ascent is made more difficult because of the rocky surface, which can be a bit slippery.

But I'm an optimist and with the help of the professional team leaders Michele and her colleague Brian Freeman, I know everyone will make it, like we did last year. Of course, the 2010 team will have the added encouragement of Peter and Amelia Hillary, and Jamling Tenzing, who regaled the Kili Clubbers with stories about their famous fathers' climbing days over dinner last night.

I can't imagine how inspirational hearing about conquering Everest would have been, but Michele said you could have heard a pin drop in the mess tent.

Yesterday's climb was epic. The 19 trekkers started walking at 8am and didn't get in to camp until 4.30pm –that's probably going to be the longest day of the entire trip. They walked most of the way through mist and cloud before enduring a pretty cold night after tucking into a beef casserole with coconut rice for dinner.

Today's climb will take between five and six hours, with the team arriving at camp at 1.30pm, after which I reckon most will put their feet up and enjoy a well earned rest or, as Anton Goldman from Point Piper, told me, the "vibe".

"It's not just about reaching the summit, it's the journey and experiences of the real Africa – it's the vibe," said Anton, who joined Humpty 2010 Kili Club to help provide world-class medical equipment that could help all kids.



I couldn't agree more. There's a bit of magic about joining the Kili Club: you feel like you can do things you've never done before because, in actual fact, you are doing just that. Holly's good friend, Alice Hocking, is also climbing. I laughed out loud when Alice's husband expressed some amusement at her decision to put her life on hold for a few weeks for Humpty by saying – "Honey, you don't even like climbing Bellevue Hill".

Alice is 33 and works as the public relations boss for cosmetics giant Estee Lauder. It's the glamour industry – as far removed from climbing Kili as can be. (Remember, I told you – no showers!) Alice and her hubby don't have any kids of their own which, to me, says volumes about her personal sacrifice. Alice decided to get involved at Humpty's last annual ball when she heard how a two-year-old child died because the hospital didn't have a piece of medical equipment worth just \$1500 that could have saved her life. That type of story is heartbreaking and since then, Alice has been on a bit of a mission – to help Humpty and keep herself motivated. As she said from Kili today, "I started doing this wishing it was over, but now, I don't want it to end."

What a great woman.

I also want to mention Dean Kirkland today. Dean, who lives in Coogee was motivated to climb Kili with Humpty after his beloved dad passed away midway through last year, around the same time he discovered the Humpty Dumpty Foundation. His father's death "served as a reminder to seize opportunities and to live life to the fullest". Well, I'm here to tell you, Dean is certainly doing that.

"The journey so far has been about managing altitude together with good organisation and great company," he said from 3950m above sea level.

Meanwhile, some of you have been wondering how I'm staying in contact with the 19 Kili Clubbers on their way to the summit. It's called a satellite phone, and the calls are booked in advance and we have to be quick so as to ensure we don't kill the battery. I will get reports from all Humpty's climbers over the next couple of days, so stay tuned. In the meantime, take heart from what Michele says: "They are all travelling well; they are just an amazing team."

And to the summit they go!

***To follow the trek, go to [www.humptysmountain.com.au](http://www.humptysmountain.com.au)***