

**DATELINE:**

**Report from Karanga Camp, 3980m ASL, Mt Kilimanjaro**

**7a.m. Thursday August 5, 2010**

**Day 6, Kili Climb 2010**

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



This year has been a big one for Humpty – we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Balmoral Burn back in May and in a couple of weeks we'll pop the corks for the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Humpty ball. And we've made history, too, by putting Peter and Amelia Hillary and Jamling Tenzing together on Mt Kilimanjaro – the first time they have climbed Africa's highest peak.

The Kili Club were at Camp Karanga when we made contact this morning, having trekked for not quite five hours yesterday during which they all conquered the taxing Barranco Wall under a clear blue sky.

"I am loving every minute of it; it's amazing being above the clouds," Claire Driver told me before asking me to pass on a message to her sister. "Happy birthday, Trish: Go girl."

Claire is a project engineer for Thiess, one of our big supporters, and couldn't be happier that she is up on Kili. The same can be said Craig Neil from Pymont, who is celebrating his 45<sup>th</sup> birthday on the mountain today. Birthdays are brilliant on Kili – last year Joe Hockey turned 44 en route to the top and the incredible porters had a birthday cake for him.

Craig knows too well how important the climb is and how important it is to support Humpty because one of his young sons spent a great deal of his early years in and out of hospital. "Give my love to the boys, Ryan and Mason," the proud dad said today. Consider it done, Craig, and thanks for sacrificing your birthday to the cause.

Craig's selflessness is mirrored by each and every one of the 19 Kili Clubbers and it seems they have totally taken to heart Jamling Tenzing's mantra – "be great, make others great".

Airlie Murray, our youngest Kili climber at the age of 19, reminded me today of the importance of family: "Climbing Mt Kili has been that much more special because I am doing it with my mum." This is the first time a mother and daughter team have joined the Kili Club for the kids' charity.

Ian Purchas and his wife, Jane Flemming – one of Humpty's board members – are also on the mountain. Ian and Jane are fitness fanatics – she was an Australian Commonwealth Games athlete – but even so, the trek is a challenge. "Pain is weakness leaving the body," Ian said. He sounds a bit like a Zen Buddhist to me but I think he's on to something, because no matter how many endorphins are charging through your body up on Kili, it is physically tough. I would have to say, one of the toughest things most of us are ever likely to do. It was for me.

As hard as it is, it can't dampen the spirits. "Standing on top of the world every day is a highlight – bring on the summit," said Nick Tobin, who is the general manager for Willoughby City Council. And how good this – Nick is will summit on a very special day. "The climb is very important to me personally. I will reach the summit on my late sister's birthday," he said. "Trudy was a primary school teacher, who lost her battle with cancer last year. She was an avid traveller who visited every continent but Africa. The climb is a very timely and appropriate opportunity to do something in her memory."

Mate, we'll all be thinking of you and Trudy tomorrow.

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**Humpty Dumpty Foundation**

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Today the team will head out from their camp on a pretty short hike to Barafu Camp – the last spot before they make their assault on the summit. Michele Rosengren from Adventure1000 says they will walk for about four hours before settling down for an easy afternoon and dinner. The plan is to break camp around 11pm and make their attempt on Uhuru Peak, which is 5896m above sea level and marks the very top of the mountain.

Having been there last year, I can only tell you how breathtaking it is and how worthwhile every step you've taken feels. Making the summit with a great team of new and old mates is something I will never forget and just imagining how brilliant the 2010 team will feel in the next 24 or so hours is giving me goosebumps.

Depending on congestion – yes, hard to believe, but it is busy up there – the ascent will take six, seven or eight hours but the team all hope to have made the summit by sunrise. No guarantees though. A quick team photo at the top of the world, and then they begin their descent back down to Barafu Camp for a bite to eat, and then further down to the Millennium Camp which is nestled at 3650m, for their last night on that mesmerising mountain.

The trick is to be efficient because of the effects of altitude on your body. The climbers are making the ascent without oxygen and at that height, the lack of oxygen does funny things to your body. Yes, it is risky, but it's a very well managed risk and the Kili Club has as its guides two of the very best professional adventurers as well as the Hillarys and Jamling Tenzing.

In total, the Kili Club will be on the go for somewhere between 10 and 12 hours, which is nothing short of an extraordinary effort.

We might not be able to make contact with the Kili Club at the summit – so don't panic if I don't update you tomorrow. I will have a chat with the team when they get back down.

Before I sign off, Anastasia Papadopoulos, who lives in Bexley, asked me to send her love to Simon and ChaChee. You know what? I would do anything for our Kili Club – they are making a sterling effort for kids who really need their help, and they deserve as much support as we back here in Australia can give them. Thanks a million.

I wish everybody all the best. I know how hard it is, I know how much our group struggled last year – we lost 4 of our trekkers who had to go down before we even attempted the final stage of the summit. If you hadn't been there it is hard to explain what at this stage is happening to you both mentally and physically.

This is one of the hardest endeavors that anybody could ever attempt. I congratulate everybody on their efforts to date, their commitment to raise \$50,000 for Humpty, their commitment to their training and their efforts to date on the mountain.

Hopefully everyone will make it but if that is not the case I know personally the sacrifices and the efforts that everybody who is part of the 2010 Kili Club has made.

Everybody is already a winner including all the parents and children who will be the beneficiaries of their efforts. Thank you from everyone back here and Pole, pole, pole (slow, slow, slow).

***To sponsor a climber or read more about the Kili Club's adventures, go to [www.humptysmountain.com.au](http://www.humptysmountain.com.au)***

