

## Trek to the Summit of Kilimanjaro

In April 2011 I was confined to bed for three weeks rest and had to have three cortisone injections into my spine. I was suffering with the most debilitating back pain; I could barely walk, could not sit for more than a few minutes and needed help to put on my socks. In December of that year, a friend asked me to join her on a trip to Tanzania to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in February 2013. I thought that she was mad, I could barely walk for more than 20 minutes and was in pretty much constant pain, but she got me thinking.



1000km. In mid February this year I boarded an Ethiopian Airways flight to Kilimanjaro Airport, Tanzania. The summit of Mount Kilimanjaro is 18,651 feet high and apart from the issue of fitness, altitude sickness can be a real problem. In total the trek was six and a half days, four days to get to base camp at Kibo Huts and a day and a half to walk back down to

Marangu Gate. We passed through varying landscapes from tropical forest to pine and banana plantations, heath land to barren moorland and arctic desert.

### Working my Socks Off

I am very goal and deadline driven so decided that I would give it a go, there was plenty of time to back out if I felt I could not make it. So I began to walk three times a week and made a note of how far I had gone each time. Slowly I began to feel better and the pain eased. This did not happen overnight but gradually I could sit at the table and eat with the family and more often than not I could put on my own socks! In March 2012 I decided to finally sign on for the Kilimanjaro Trip, with the provision that there was still time to back out. In May 2012 I took part in the Three Day 100km Ypres Walk through the World War 1 Grave Yards. By now I had increased my training to four walks a week, averaging between 20-40km in total and by June I had walked over 330km. Perhaps I *could* do it! Between February 2012 and 2013, I walked almost

### Sunrise Over Africa

The summit night began on February 25<sup>th</sup> at midnight. We had to ascend the final 1500m in six and a half hours in order to see the sunrise over Africa from Gilman's Point (the roof of Africa). The route was extremely steep and we continually zig-zagged our way up over rock and loose scree. It was a tough journey but I knew that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity, there was no way that I was giving up now. My back had been fine for the trip, even carrying my rucksack each day and sleeping on a mat in a tent each night; I was determined to make it to the top, and I had promised my three girls that I would video the sun rise for them. There was no going back, so I dug deep and just kept putting one foot in front of the other 'pole pole' (slowly slowly as we had been told since the start of the trek by our guides.)

At 6.20am I reached Gilman's Point in time to see the sun rise and enjoy standing

*Continued on page 11*

at the summit at 5685m (18651 feet). Originally I wanted to do this to prove to myself that I could do it, but I then learned about the Churchill Hospital Support Fund and decided to seek sponsorship for the Renal Transplant Department. Mum was diagnosed with acute kidney failure in November last year. It is a condition that she has lived with and managed for many years but finally she needed dialysis. She and Dad have had such fantastic support from the Churchill Hospital (part of the Oxford Radcliffe hospital) that I thought it would

be good to give something back and to highlight the amazing job that is done by the NHS.

Looking back I am so proud of what I achieved, and I would encourage anyone reading this to set their own targets and go for it and surprise yourself with what you can achieve. Thank you to all in the Wychwoods who have generously donated. I have raised over £1,800 to date and still counting, as people see my photos and hear about the trip.

**Karen Robinson nee Brown**  
**daughter of Beryl and Brian Brown**

## Milton Fete Goes ‘Down on the Farm’



The Fete will be on its usual date of the first Saturday in July which is: **6th of July**. This year’s extra special event will be **THE GRAND HOBBY HORSE DERBY!**

Everybody and anybody is eligible to enter – and a hobby horse is the simplest thing in the world to make. It’s just a stick with a horse’s head.

You can make your own or you can just buy one from a local toy shop. They range from a fiver to around £15 on Amazon. The first event for our Jockeys will be a gentle canter around the village. This starts at Grove’s yard and the assembly time is 1.00pm. The Gymkhana is in the Arena at 3.00pm where there will be

prizes for the best turned out Horse and Rider and – The *RACES!*

Sadly neither Ladbrokes or the TOTE were available for this event, so the adults will just have to make do with a pint from our well stocked beer tent! And maybe a hot dog or hamburger from the BBQ. Or possibly browsing some of the many stalls, or having a go at some of the competitions, or looking at the Classic Cars or ... well, you get the idea.

The ever- popular children’s activity tent was bursting at the seams last year, so we have made it a bit bigger for 2013. All the ‘usual suspects’ will be there including the joust run and go-karts. This time the Classic Cars will be cruising round the village slightly before the main parade, so anybody who would like to show their car or motorcycle can contact **Paul Young** on: [miltonclassicsbtinternet.com](mailto:miltonclassicsbtinternet.com).

This year we are offering a special **Weather Guarantee!** The weather *will* be better than last year, but just in case we are planning more undercover work. If you would like to exhibit or volunteer to help contact **Dee Brooker** on: 01993 831704.