

A full-page photograph of a smiling Black man with a grey beard, wearing a dark blue climbing jacket, a grey beanie, and white gloves. He is positioned on a dark, craggy rock face, with a red tent or tarp visible behind him. The background is a textured, grey rock surface.

LS
LIFE & STYLE

EDDIE NESTOR:

Conquering Kilimanjaro

Young Voices

Oliver Rodigan on stepping out of his father's shadow

Funny Guy

Comedian Nathan Caton on bringing his new show to Edinburgh

Snap Happy

Photographer Vanley Burke captures a slice of black British history



AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN

There was tiredness, terror and tears as Eddie Nestor and friends embarked on the

BY EDDIE NESTOR

“I T HAS been several weeks since we came down from Africa's highest mountain and I still feel mentally and physically shattered.

The locals believe climbing Mount Kilimanjaro to be stupid; a feat for only Westerners with more money than sense.

Nevertheless, it had always been on my bucket list and somehow I managed to convince my trainer Dave, my manager Sarah, and my wife Lisa to join me on the excursion.

Robbie Gee was supposed to come too but as he exceeded the weight allowance, we had to bid him farewell at the airport McDonalds. And judging by the size of the burger that was in front of him, I couldn't help thinking he'd make a great bouncy castle for my kids!

Undertaking the climb was part of a series of events we put on for a fundraising exercise we called Silimanjaro. Our aim was to raise money for four charities: We Are Macmillan Cancer Support, the ACLT (African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust), The Rudolph Walker Foundation and Urban Synergy.

The first thing to say is this: Climbing Mount Kilimanjaro is hard – really hard. They call it the 'crying mountain' and I have to admit, we all cried. Not the polite, 'sniff, sniff' cry either; but the ugly, snotty one that you hope nobody ever reminds you of.

I did start to keep a diary but if I shared with you some of the things I wrote in there, you would have no respect for me. So I am going to give you edited high (or should that be low) lights.

I now know that camping is not for me. It's horrible and let's just say, it was made more



READY TO RUMBLE: (l-r)
Eddie's manager Sarah; his wife Lisa; Eddie; and trainer Dave



BONDING EXPERIENCE:
Eddie and his wife Lisa

uncomfortable for my wife Lisa by the fact that when it was cold and raining, I wasn't leaving to go to the toilet.

In fact your personal hygiene takes a real battering. One of the guys was hallucinating and needed to have an injection. He begged the female doctor not to inject him in his bum, as he hadn't changed his briefs in five days.

Travelling huge distances over rough terrain in terrible weather conditions may sound like a great bonding experience for a man and his wife, and it was. It has definitely brought us closer together. The one 'domestic' we had was when I asked her how it was possible for people to cook food thousands of metres up in the mountain that tasted better than she could manage in England with an expensive pot. Suffice to

say, my observation didn't go down too well.

It really was amazing how the porters were able to walk past you carrying tents, pots, your luggage and theirs and still get to the base camp in time to set

“Headaches, vomiting and nosebleeds all added to a feeling of tiredness and nausea; a bit like when I first met my mother-in-law!”

up your tent and cook your food.

Altitude is a weird one. I had bought a mask to train in, consulted doctors and even gone to an altitude centre to prepare for its affects, but it still got me.

Headaches, vomiting, nosebleeds all added to a feeling of tiredness and nausea – a bit like

when I first met my mother-in-law!

On the fourth day, already tired, disorientated and fed up, you are woken at midnight and you walk, in the dark up a never-ending and incredibly steep hill.

Just in case you think I am exaggerating, we arrived at the summit at 09.42am. Though tough, it isn't really the physicality of it that gets you. It's the mental and spiritual side that is tested. That is perhaps the reason why all the women in our 22-strong group made it to the very top of Africa's highest, in

the beautiful and welcoming bosom of Tanzania.

I truly didn't believe I was going to make it but then learned of the regenerative powers of the sun. It was amazing to feel the strength of light. I also learned the real meaning of teamwork. It is a weird thing that the climb was easier for me when I had someone else to worry about.

We all had our moments and nobody was embarrassed about shedding a tear once we got to the top, but for me there was one day, which had a profound affect on me.

Lisa is scared of heights – I know, it's probably the worst phobia to have when trying to climb a mountain. And though we refer to the ascent as a climb, it is in actual fact more of a trek, except for this one part: The Barranco Wall.

This was mountain climbing and with the rain, which had now turned to ice, it was very scary indeed. It was here that the previously invincible porters became human.

A calor gas cylinder fell off somebody's head and another person was treated by the doctor for severe chest pains. So when Lisa started suffering a panic attack, everybody could relate to her fears – but it wasn't pretty and I felt impotent.

Even the doctor was told to go away and let the four porters who had now taken control, get on with trying to help her. What hurt me is that I could not. It was too serious for that.

If you have ever seen a loved one completely lose it and not be able to help, you'll know it isn't nice.

Not even Dave, who took personal responsibility for all of us

CHARITIES SUPPORTED BY SILIMANJARO

We Are Macmillan Cancer Support

The charity is a source of support,

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

helping with all the things that people affected by cancer want and need. Macmillan not only supports those living with cancer, but also carers, families and communities.

www.macmillan.org.uk

ACLT

The African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust is a leading leukaemia charity dedicated to raising awareness of the severe shortage of African/Caribbean donors on UK stem cell, blood and organ registers. The ACLT promotes, educates and recruits lifesavers who are seriously under-represented.

www.aclt.org



The Rudolph Walker Foundation

Founded by celebrated British actor Rudolph Walker, the foundation exists to nurture and develop the creative and technical skills and talents of young people by providing them with equipment and facilities, which will enable them to produce and distribute audio visual programmes and other types of digital content.

www.therwf.org.uk



Urban Synergy

Urban Synergy provides early intervention mentoring for 11-18 year olds primarily within the London Borough of Lewisham. The charity's one-to-one mentoring provides support to many young people and includes life skills training, workshops and seminars to help youngsters reach their full potential.

www.urbansynergy.com





HIGH ENOUGH

challenge of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro

as a personal trainer could do anything.

Even now, having completed the journey of a lifetime, achieved something many people only dream of, and raised nearly £40,000 for charity, all I keep thinking of is a situation in which I was powerless.

Before anyone gets too sentimental, Lisa did manage to make it and showed that ignorance and bloody mindedness could be used to positive effect, as she did no real training at all.

I didn't cry when I was diagnosed with cancer, jumped from a plane, or ran the London Marathon, but I did on the mountain and it felt good.

Would I do it again? Hell no. Would I advise anybody else to do it? Yes. You will have to dig deep and it is at those times that you really find out about yourself and that is a bit scary, but good for the soul.

Sound Flash on September 5 is the finale of Silimanjaro and will see DJs including Daddy Ernie, Special Touch and Mistri come together to provide an evening of entertainment. R&B, rare groove, reggae and much more will provide the soundtrack for the night, which is our way to celebrate conquering K and to thank everyone who supported us along the way.

It gives us all a huge sense of pride to have raised money for worthy charities, but we are even more proud of how the project has been embraced by the community – and it is fantastic to not have to use the word in a pejorative sense.

People really have been fantastically generous with both their time and money, and on behalf of Sarah, Lisa, Dave and Robbie, this is our opportunity to say thank you. Hope to see you on September 5."

● Sound Flash will take place at Camden Centre, London WC1 on September 5.

For more information, visit www.eddienestor.com

● You can still donate by going to Virginmoneygiving.com/Silimanjaro or text sili to 70300 to give £3.



MISSION COMPLETE: Eddie Nestor conquered Kilimanjaro

KILIMANJARO: FIVE FACTS

● Mount Kilimanjaro is the tallest mountain on the African continent and the highest free-standing mountain in the world.



● Kilimanjaro has three volcanic cones, Mawenzi, Shira and Kibo. Mawenzi and Shira are extinct but Kibo, the highest peak, is dormant and could erupt again.

● Nearly every climber who has summited Uhuru Peak, the highest summit on Kibo's crater rim, has recorded his or her thoughts about the accomplishment in a book stored in a wooden box at the top.

● South African Bernard Goosen twice scaled Mt. Kilimanjaro in a wheelchair. His first summit, in 2003, took nine days; his second, four years later, took only six.

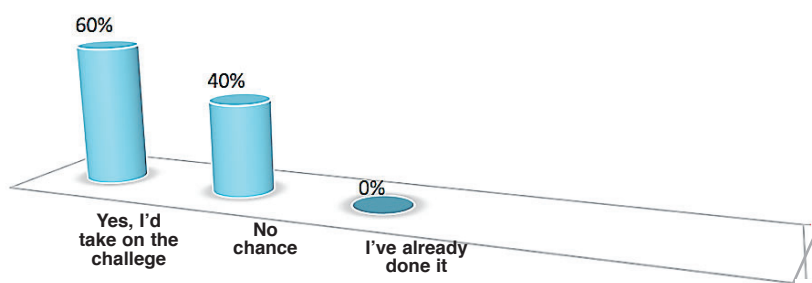
● Approximately 25,000 people attempt to summit Mount Kilimanjaro annually. Approximately two-thirds are successful. Altitude-related problems are the most common reasons climbers turn back.

Source: www.worldwildlife.org



The Voice poll

Would you consider climbing Mount Kilimanjaro?



UNDER THE STARS

FOUR NIGHTS OF **FREE** LIVE OUTDOOR MUSIC

THURSDAY 13 AUGUST

MAXI PRIEST

ASWAD

JANET KAY

FRIDAY 14 AUGUST

SUKSHINDER SHINDA

JASSI SIDHU

HUSSNAIN LAHORI

RAJA KASHIF & RUBAYYAT JAHAN

ETERNAL TAAL

HOSTED BY DJ MOSES & TOMMY SANDHU

SATURDAY 15 AUGUST

HOT CHOCOLATE

CLEM CURTIS & THE FOUNDATIONS

SOUL LEGENDS TRIBUTE SHOW

SUNDAY 16 AUGUST

ROYAL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

FEAT. LAURA WRIGHT

FIREWORKS FINALE

Central Park, East Ham, E6 Gates Open 6.30pm

Visit www.newham.gov.uk/uts

[@NewhamLondon](https://twitter.com/NewhamLondon) #NewhamUTS [f newhamevents](https://www.facebook.com/newhamevents)

No parking on site, please use public transport. You may be searched as a condition of entry. No glass bottles or dogs allowed on site. Programme subject to change.

Mayor of Newham