

**UGANDA  
RUWENZORI  
APRIL 2004**

**By Karen Hauptfleisch**

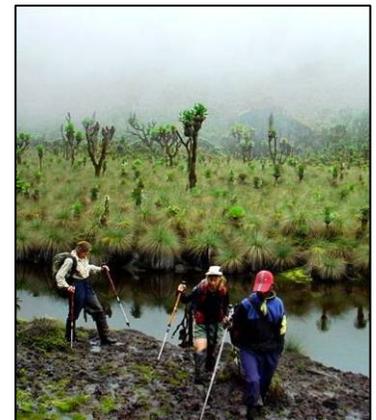


Pushing the bus out of a ditch; bouncing around trying to avoid serious head collisions whilst the bus driver tried to avoid massive potholes and other crazy drivers, made for yet another exciting trip. Soon after we arrived at our overnight hotel, the rain started to pour down. It was going to be a wet start.

Day 1: It was quite a site to see 12 Moonies, 38 porters, 6 guides, 2 cooks and 2 rangers trying to navigate the steep uphill's and downhill's to Nyabitaba camp.

Day 2: Another exciting day of uphill's, downhill's, slippery rocks and rain followed. Everyone got drenched, even the people wearing Mr Gortex's gear so the John Matte hut was a welcome site for most of us. Some Moonies showed some initiative trying to get their clothes dry and sleeping with smelly wet socks became something I am proud to say can be done.

Day 3: Oh be scared! Be very scared of the bog. Just when I thought everyone was exaggerating seeing people jump excitedly from tussock to foothold trying to avoid the deep portions of bog, I took a step, and were buried in mud, hip deep. Trying to claim my Wellingtons back, was quite a mission. Whilst the rest of the Moonies rested at Bijuku camp; some starting to suffer from the altitude; Piers, Stephen and myself visited the beautiful Glacial lakes. That afternoon, crampons were tried on. I said a couple of prayers listening to the howling winds.



***Be scared of the bogg***

Day 4: We woke up to winds, more drizzle and thick mist. A decision was made. 5 Moonies would hike to Kitandara camp whilst the rest would push on for high camp. I was so excited. It was icy above



***Elena Hut***

4000m and treacherous icy rock faces had to be faced. Porters and fellow Moonies alike fell and hypothermia became a big reality. Moonies, porters and guides arrived at Elena Hut in dribs and drabs, shivering and shaking from the exertion, and the demons we had to face. We all huddled together in our sleeping bags, unsure what the rest of the day would bring. And then there was a shout! The sun has just shown herself. The evening showed a clear sky, moon rising and a spectacular sunset.

Day 5: At 04h00 in the morning, the Moonies in Kitanara awoke to hail on the roof of the hut. At

## ***Sunrise on Africa's Peaks – Uganda – Rwenzori***

Elena hut, we geared ourselves with harnesses, crampons and ice-axes and, together with the guides, we tackled the glacier en route to Margherita. The mist was thick, and got even thicker. About a kilometre into the attempt, we had to abandon it. The equally tricky, icy descent down to Kitandara followed. I was not looking forward to sharing my sleeping bag with smelly wet socks.

Day 6: More bog followed on our way to Guy Yeoman hut, where everyone was in good spirits listening to Tony's tunes.

Day 7: The 4 Moonies who were hiking two days in one to get off the mountain early made it safely down where they cleaned up before climbing into the drinks. The rest of the party walked as far as Nyabitaba camp at a leisurely pace.

Day 8: While Ela recovered from the Altitude with tea and some G&T, Piers, Simon and myself boarded a bus and headed for the source of the Nile where a bungee jump and a river rafting trip on the Nile was followed by the party to end all parties.



***The view from Elena Hut***

Day 9: Another adventurous trip back to Kampala was followed by yet another party.

Day 10: I survived the Mountains of the Moon, but a big piece of my heart was left behind. Chris, our guide, could hardly believe his eyes when I started bawling when we said our goodbyes'.