

Climber Killed By Lightning On Kilimanjaro

2 January 2013

Ian McKeever, 42, died in the freak tragedy as he led a group up the mountain.

It is understood a number of other climbers with him also needed medical attention.

Mr McKeever was a lecturer and broadcaster who regularly mentored hikers, including groups of Irish schoolchildren, climbing to the 5,896m (19,340ft) summit.

He was from Lough Dan in Co Wicklow.

The latest expedition set off to Tanzania from Ireland on December 28 and began their ascent the day before New Year's Eve.

In online updates, Mr McKeever wrote that had been torrential rain but spirits remained high among the hikers.

In his final post he said: "We pray for drier weather tomorrow - the big day. It's the Lava Tower." The Lava Tower is a landmark on the climb.

It is understood he was killed in a lightning storm.

The adventurer was known for many feats, including scaling Mount Everest.

In 2008, he helped his then 10-year-old godson Sean McSharry become the youngest person in Europe to reach the top of Kilimanjaro.

Mr McKeever is the former holder of the record for completing the seven highest peaks in the world.

Recently he had been attempting, along with his friend and African climbing guide Samuel Kinsonga, to break the record for the fastest ascent of Kilimanjaro as part of an anti-racism charity campaign.

He was the author of two books Give Me Shelter and Give Me Heroes and was working on a third book Give Me 28 Days.

On his Facebook page last night, a statement said: "It is with deep regret, that we, Ian's family, fiancée Anna and friends, advise of his sudden death on Kilimanjaro, today, doing what he loved best."

Tributes referred to him as an inspiration.

The Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed it was helping.

"We are providing consular assistance," a spokesman said.