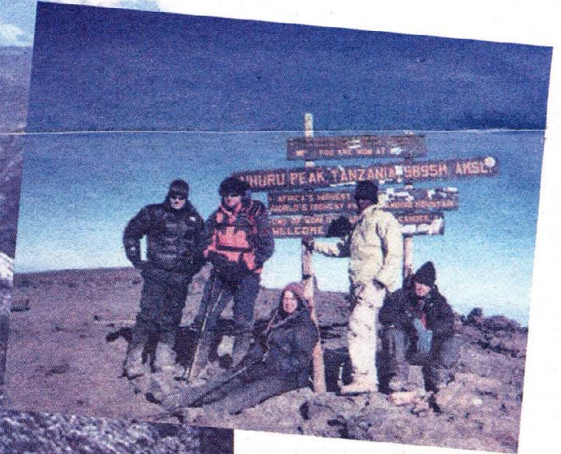




Left: Dilwyn at the base of the summit  
Right: Dilwyn and co-climbers at the top of Mount Kilimanjaro on Uhuru peak  
Bottom: Dilwyn Howells outside Premier's Newport office



# Financial director scales new heights

**Dilwyn Howells, the Financial Director of Newport-based Premier Forest Products, is a man used to challenges.**

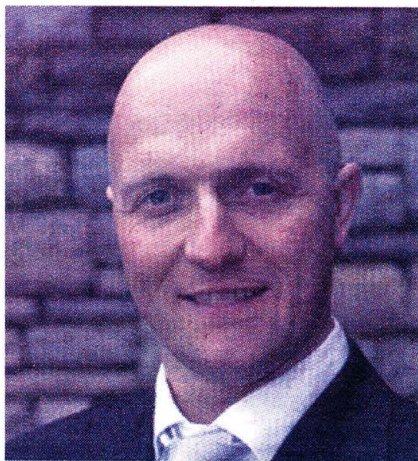
In the last 12 years, he and his colleagues have fought off stiff competition from others in the timber industry to become one of the largest independent importers in the UK, with a turnover of £30m.

So, it should have come as no surprise to anyone who knows Dilwyn, then, when he announced he would mark his 40th birthday by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest freestanding mountain in the world, and the highest peak in Africa.

Dilwyn decided to climb the 6,000m high mountain in Tanzania on a whim.

He said: "I have always been into my sport. I am an avid skier and have a few triathlons under my belt, so am reasonably fit. So I thought climbing Kilimanjaro would be an interesting experience to undertake and share with my friends and family back home in Wales."

However, even the very fit can have



problems with the climb, as the long walk to the base of the summit can be made difficult by adverse weather.

For Dilwyn, the weather was on his side, but like many who have succeeded in climbing Kilimanjaro before, it was the summit, which takes about a day to climb, that was the real test.

He said: "After five days on the lower parts of the mountain acclimatising to the mountain conditions and getting

used to the higher altitudes, myself and the eight others on the climb were not feeling our best before we got to the summit.

"All that walking, basic food and drink, and no facilities to wash ourselves, began to take their toll, physically and mentally.

"However, on reaching the base of the summit and looking up and seeing the great distance we still had to go was daunting, yet exhilarating at once, and we all knew that it was worth the extra hardship to continue up the mountain.

"It took us six-and-a-half hours to climb to the top and it was definitely one of the hardest things I have ever done – harder than all the thousands of meetings with bank managers put together!

"I would recommend the climb to anyone who is pretty fit and likes a challenge. The feeling of achievement it gave me is second only to the birth of my daughter."

Dilwyn is now planning to climb Acon Cagua, a mountain in Argentina, which is 1,000m higher than Kilimanjaro.