

**THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA  
HON. SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013**

The following office bearers of The Mountain Club of South Africa were elected for the current year at the Annual General Meeting held on **Saturday 13 April, 2013** in Cape Town.

**The office bearers who served on ExCo 2012:**

Ms Petro Grobler	President
Mr Brian Lambourne	Deputy President
Mr Petrus Nel	Hon. Treasurer
Mrs Jenny Paterson	Hon. Secretary
Mr Bill Uren	Additional member
Mr Dobek Pater	Additional member

**The Central Committee comprised of the Chairperson of the various Sections, as follows:**

Mr Hermann Kühne	Chairperson - Amajuba Section
Mr Brian Lambourne	Chairperson - Cape Town Section
Mr Lars Strydom	Chairperson - Eastern Province Section
Ms Charlotte Augustyn	Chairperson - Free State Section
Mr Viljoen Thom	Chairperson - Hottentots Holland Section
Mr Dobek Pater	Chairperson - Johannesburg Section
Mr James Voortman	Chairperson - KwaZulu-Natal Section
Mr Petrus Nel	Chairperson - Magaliesberg Section
Mr Roland Graf	Chairperson - Namibia Section
Mr Wouter Jordaan	Chairperson - Paarl Wellington Section
Mr Bill Uren	Chairperson - South Cape Section
Mr Peet Badenhorst	Chairperson - Stellenbosch Section
Mr Johan Botha	Chairperson - Tygerberg Section
Mr Tonie Roux	Chairperson - Worcester Section

**Finances**

The Club's finances remain in a healthy state with

1. Accumulated Funds standing at R117 692 (2012 – R108 691) - an increase of R9 001 (2012 - decrease of R13 201) over the previous year;
2. Special Purpose Funds at R781 427 (2012 – R782 850) – a decrease of R1 423 (2012 - increase of R50 814) over the previous year.

The net increase in Accumulated Funds was due to there being a net Surplus of R9 001 for the current year compared to a Deficit of R13 201 for the previous year – an improvement of R22 202.

The net improvement of R22 202 was due primarily to –

1. an increase in Levies of R7 979;
2. a decrease in expenditure related to Advertising of R7 840;
3. a decrease in the cost of attending the UIAA meeting of R7 251;
4. an increase in the cost of the UIAA Subscriptions of R4 927; and
5. a decrease in the Non –Operating Expenditure of R 5 625.

The net decrease of R1 423 in Special Purpose Funds was due primarily to –

1. an increase of Donations/Grants received of R25 141 offset by an increase of expenditure of R89 715 in respect of the Search and Rescue Fund due the purchase of equipment and costs of the National Search and Rescue Training meet;
2. an increase in expenditure of R22 153 in respect of the Expeditions Operating Fund;

3. an increase in expenditure of R5 000 in respect of the Lectures Fund for the S Venables lecture tour of South Africa;
4. an increase in the expenditure of R3 226 in respect of the Publications Fund funding the shortfall in the costs of producing the MCSA Journal;
5. decreases of Donations/Grants received of R15 170 and expenditure of R14 703 in respect of the Centenary Journal Youth Fund both relating to bridging funds received in the previous year; and
6. a decrease of Interest allocation of R2 688.

The Club acknowledges with thanks the annual grant given by the Department of Transport of R73 000 to the Search and Rescue organisation of the Club to ensure its continued ability to offer adequately trained and equipped resources to be provided by the Club as and when requested by the Department.

In view of the Club's status as a Public Benefit Organisation and the tax exemptions that flow therefrom the Club has no tax liability.

### **UIAA MATTERS**

The UIAA enjoyed a good and peaceful year under the leadership of Frits Vrijlandt of the Netherlands. The office in Bern, Switzerland, experienced a high turnover of personnel but managed well regardless. Similar to the MCSA, their administration experiences severe problems with communication as federations do not respond readily to e-mails. There are also problems experienced with the payment of levies.

**General Assembly:** The General Assembly was hosted by the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) as part of, and concluding, their 150<sup>th</sup>-year celebrations. With mountaineering and climbing listed as a national sport in Switzerland, and with 135 000 members, SAC is of national importance in mountainous Switzerland. The organisation and facilities were of a very high standard and the occasion was generously subsidised by SAC.

The German Alpine Club (founded 1869; 1 008 000 members) and the Austrian Alpine Club (founded 1949; 626 925 members from 12 clubs/organisations) were re-admitted as members and will strengthen the body considerably.

The UN recognises 169 countries of which approximately only 50 are members of the UIAA (some countries have more than one federation as a UIAA member). The UIAA wants to tap this potential and to grow. It is therefore of particular concern that 26 federations left the UIAA in the past few years. There are two main reasons for this. In 2007, the International Council for Competition Climbing (ICC), which was part of the UIAA, became the International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) outside of the UIAA with a membership of 81 federations. Sport climbers have to be members of the IFSC in order to take part in competitions. Some federations therefore chose IFSC before the UIAA to avoid paying double membership fees.

The other federations who had left the UIAA are mostly smaller ones (less than 1 000 members). They are the ones who probably find the cost too high and/or do not see enough value in UIAA membership. Most often they do not receive any support from the government. Recommendations by a working group to increase membership will be implemented. However, the fee structure is highly unfavourable for small federations and needs to be looked into.

**Management Committee:** The four-year-term of Dave Jones lasted until October 2013. As the MCSA is the only federation in Africa that is a UIAA member, its nominated candidate, Petro Grobler, was elected at the General Assembly in the seat for the African Continental

Representative. The UIAA looks upon the MCSA – as their only member in Africa – to try and extend UIAA membership in Africa.

**Finance:** Income from sponsorships is increasing. Part of the UIAA's current marketing strategy is to approach gear manufacturers in Asian countries, as well as high-impact, non-climbing brands e.g., BMW.

**Commissions:** Very good work is being done by the Commissions. It is up to the MCSA to tap into this resource through our commission members who must play an active role to obtain maximum benefit for the Club. For a small faraway federation, the MCSA is playing quite an active role in the Commissions (see reports below).

**General:** Each federation received a copy of a new publication "Alpine Skills: Summer (Basic knowledge – alpine hiking – climbing - alpinism)", funded by the Petzl Foundation and translated into English by the Canadian Alpine Club. The syllabus is similar to the Northern Transvaal (Magaliesberg) Section's Mountain Leadership Training Manual.

A database of judgments, rules and doctrines relating specifically to rights and responsibilities in the mountains can now be found on JusMontagna.it.

A preliminary meeting between the European federations took place to investigate establishing a mountaineering association for Europe specifically, similar to ones already established by Asia and South America.

Visit to South Africa by the UIAA President: Frits Vrijlandt was only the second UIAA President to visit South Africa. He was a guest of the SA government at a tourism conference in Durban. KwaZulu-Natal Section liaised with Frits and also took him climbing at Monteseel.

### **UIAA Access Commission**

Corresponding Member: Roy Kendal

The Access Commission met in Stockholm in June 2013 where Clare Bond of the BMC stepped down as Access Commission President and the role was taken on by Juan Jesús Ibáñez Martín from the Spanish Federation of Mountain and Climbing Sports. Focus of the Commission for the next four years is to improve the visibility of the Commission, expand membership and possibly join the IUCN World Parks Congress on behalf of the UIAA. Emphasis is again on development of a Wiki of global access information. The global Wiki database project is a work in progress that will highlight access issues around the world and link countries with similar access issues so they can help each other. This work is being conducted with the support of UIAA member federations and the general public.

Another task for the Commission is to see how to incorporate the Expeditions Working Group into the Access Commission and to update the UIAA on expedition issues. A draft document has been drawn up to reflect the UIAA's position on Expeditions. It is hoped that a formal document policy will be distributed in 2014.

Two further meetings were held using Skype as a means of communication. This allowed Commission members to exchange ideas, discuss and address issues and to try and expedite matters. The next official meeting is to be held in Teheran in June 2014. As a corresponding member it is not expected that I attend.

It is interesting to note how active some Access members are. A lot of work is being done in Brazil (acesopanam.com), working together with other South American countries, pooling resources for mountain clean-ups, addressing access issues and outreach programs.

- André Ilha, a long-time Brazilian climber has written a piece about “The Right to Risk” which pertains to adventure sports but is very pertinent to climbing.
- The BMC has produced a document, Climbing & Occupiers Liability, highlighting land owners' liability.
- The Portuguese Camping and Mountaineering Federation published a leaflet with some information on mountain access and protection.
- The Spanish Federation for Mountain and Climbing Sports are responsible for promoting and implementing trail walking projects in Spain and have put out a document on “Marked Paths and Sustainable Rural Development”.
- The New Zealand Walking Access Commission, which was established by the New Zealand government to focus on public access to recreational areas and have developed a web site describing access for the public. Information on Access member’s publications and websites can be obtained from me.

Certainly I can report that the Johannesburg and Magaliesburg sections continue to work hard together on issues such as fire breaks, new properties (Wilgepoort) and servitude problems that continue to plague us.

Going forward on a national level the main issue is to investigate the issue of property registration for MCSA sections. This is in view of new legislation regarding PBOs where there could be tax implications that might affect property registration. The idea is that new properties will be registered in a Trust. A sub-committee will be formed to address this.

#### **UIAA Medical Commission**

Corresponding Member: Dr Eckart von Delft

This is a short summary of proceedings by the UIAA MEDCOM in 2012/2013.

1. The guidelines on **neurological diseases** in mountaineering will be updated in 2014.
2. The AGM of MEDCOM took place in Poland in 2013 during the Hypoxia Symposium.
3. The Swedish representative on MEDCOM reported that an Organization of Medical Experts for Injured Climbers has been created in Sweden. This could be the way forward for other UIAA member countries.
4. UIAA needs to create guidelines on the **management of pain** in the wilderness environment.
5. **Safety and Success Series:** Expert guidelines on health matters for mountaineers climbing at high altitude on 5 peaks are available through UIAA MEDCOM. The peaks are Island Peak, Aconcagua, Denali, Mera and Toubkal. Soon guidelines will be drawn up for Mt. Everest and Mt. Kenya.
6. A **Medical Research Expedition is going the Manaslu in 2015** and places for interested participants are still available.
7. The **UK has 160 holders of the Diploma of Mountain Medicine.**
8. The NKBV (Nederlandse Klim- en Bergsportvereniging) has conducted **research in Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)** on 143 climbers who climbed in the Italian Alps to heights of 4 550 m. The researchers tested the concentration of volatile organic compounds in exhaled breath and the results are awaited. These compounds are currently studied in AMS.
9. **UIAA Guidelines** on asthma, Hypertention, Diabetes Mellitus, Survival and Caving Medicine **must be updated.** Whereas IKAR guidelines address treatment and rescue, the UIAA MEDCOM guidelines address prevention.
10. **New guidelines in development are as follows:** drug use and abuse in mountaineering; dental problems in the mountains; risk management and first aid for climbers and minimal standards for safety and treatment when using artificial hypoxia. An alphabetical list of drugs used in mountaineering will be compiled so that climbers and their doctors have

access to this. An addition to this list will be short acting sedatives (solpidem with a halflife of 90 minutes) and painkillers like tramadol and other opiates. MEDCOM has concluded that **drug use and abuse cannot be controlled in mountaineering (unlike competition climbing)**. Climbers will use drugs to treat medical conditions or to improve their performance. **Climbing without the use of drugs and supplemental oxygen is the most ethical approach but cannot be enforced.**

11. MEDCOM will compile a **list of books on Mountain Medicine** so that climbers and doctors can access them.
12. MEDCOM is also looking for a **volunteer who can translate** the book written in german language, **Modern Travel Medicine, into the English.**

#### **UIAA Mountain Protection (Conservation) Commission - (includes National Mountain Conservation Report)**

Corresponding Member: Ms Maretha Alant

Committee members: Fran Hunziker and Fred van Berkel

**UIAA Mountain Protection Award 2013:** As a member of the UIAA Mountain Protection Assessment Team Maretha took part in the review and voting to select the award winning Mountain Protection initiative for 2013. The award winner will be officiallly announced on 15 March 2014.

**Commenting role:** No comments were submitted for proposed developments in mountain areas during the formal EIA process. The proposal for a cableway in the Drakensberg is being monitored.

**Communication with Sections regarding conservation projects:** No formal interaction took place. Alien clearing, footpath maintenance, tree planting and fire management is continuing to take place in various sections.

**Planned projects for 2014:** Improved communication with Sections.

#### **UIAA Safety Commission**

Commission Member: Alan Jarvis

#### **Summary**

The annual UIAA Safety Commission meeting was held in Chamonix, France , May 28-30, 2013. There was a good mix of UIAA delegates, manufacturers and interested parties attending from Europe and the US. The inclusion of the DAV back in the UIAA will help, both with their resources and focus. However, the fatality in Switzerland due to the failure of the Via Ferrata EAS device and the successfujl use of the UIAA SAFECOM to deal with this issue and subsequent recalls, shows that there is indeed a role for this Commission.

#### **Specific Items of Interest**

**New President:** Dave Customer (US) has taken over from J F Charlet (France) who had served as President for the maximum period allowed. This is a hard role to fill as the incumbent needs a lot of time and a broad mountaineering/climbing background. J F Charlet is now in charge of the EU Committee on Mountaineering Equipment for the complementary EU CEN Standards. He is a professional guide (being the most senior mountain guide in France) and teaches at the Chamonix Guide School.

**Harnesses:** report on work to upside-down test and various types of hardnesses.

**Crash pads:** feedback on work to develop a new Standard for crash pads. A Working Group has been formed to address this.

**Ropes edge test/energy absorption:** feedback from the Italian team that has been working on this issue for a long time is that this is quite a contentious issue since almost any sharp edge will cut a rope, and it was felt that quantifying this might lead climbers to believe that ropes could withstand sharp edge abuse. However some ropes could be appreciably more resistant to being damaged than others, and it was felt that it would be good for climbers to know this. There are some good ways to measure the resistance to being cut and it was voted to include a test to measure this in the standard. CAI will develop the test as an Annex to the existing Rope Standard.

**Via Ferrata Energy Absorbing System fatality:** the failure of an EAS in use that caused a fatality in September 2012 was discussed in more detail. This incident shows the usefulness of a body like the SAFECOM that is flexible and has connections with most major climbing manufacturers, testing laboratories and many user groups. Although the failed EAS was certified by both EN 958 as well as the UIAA 128 Standards, there was an issue that the subsequent wear and tear caused by everyday use had degraded it. This sort of thing is not covered by any of the Standards and is always left up to the manufacturers to specify how items should be inspected, and retired when required. Discussions are ongoing about this.

**Climbing anchors:** moving closer to being able to issue a Classification System of corrosion and stress corrosion cracking for anchors - the aim is to resolve it by the next meeting in 2014.

**Textile parts & cyclic loading:** the initial investigation to the EAS fatality suggested that cyclic loading was responsible for the failure. In the end this was not the main issue, but it did cause SAFECOM to discuss the potential of cyclic loading and of “fatigue”-like failure occurring to equipment. It is normally assumed with metal parts that fatigue due to cyclic loading is not an issue, mainly because the number of cycles are either not high enough and/or loads are not high compared to the design strength. However fatigue to nylon and other “plastic” (or textile) parts has never been considered. I did a literature survey and found that cyclic loading does indeed affect nylon ropes in other applications, although for various reasons:

- Abrasive dirt particles trapped between fibres, cycling loading causes 3-body wear to the fibres
- The internal heat generated by individual fibres elongating (hysteresis) affects bonds, and after enough cycles it can reduce strength significantly, however not much research has been done yet (is an issue for deep water oilfield production platforms)

A decision was taken to perform a more in-depth look at the potential for cyclic loading to affect textile/nylon items.

**Children and climbing equipment:** the Via Ferrata EAS issue brought to light the difficulty in making equipment that can safeguard both lightweight (children mainly) and adults. The principle issues are:

- One needs a certain amount of weight to activate various devices (to overcome friction, break stitches etc.)
- Too much weight might in principle overload some devices (a very heavy adult loaded with gear for instance)
- The ability of dynamic rope to absorb a climbing fall depends to a certain extent on the climber’s weight: too heavy and too light can be a problem for a given rope
- The option of making several sizes for different weights is balanced against the possibility of using the wrong size, with possible subsequent failure

- The potential maturity of children and their ability to use the more complex safety equipment safely

The general approach adopted has been that anyone under 40 kilograms (total weight including clothing, helmet etc) is also quite likely not mature enough to climb safely independently, and should be belayed instead. An example was given of a child climbing up a Via Ferrata and neglecting to clip and re-clip properly every station.

A related problem that many parents and guardians are not aware of is that a light-weight person falling on many of the stiffer dynamic ropes (yet still within the overall requirements) might not be safeguarded adequately by them during a fall because it does not elongate enough due to the lower fall energy, and thus not absorb enough energy over a long enough time. Lighter people need more elastic ropes in effect. But this is very difficult to deal with in a safety Standard, it is more of an education issue (which in fact is the work area of a different UIAA Commission).

**Climbing anchors/corrosion:** this topic finally seems to be nearing a conclusion after quite a few years. The general idea of classifying anchors according to corrosion/stress corrosion cracking (SCC) resistance was adopted several years ago, but it has not been easy to finalise things. The main issue is that the conservative (“safe”) option of requiring High Corrosion Resistant (HCR) materials for any areas suspected of SCC would make bolting there according to the Standard requirements quite expensive. And possibly over-kill in many cases. However it is very difficult to distinguish WHICH locations are at risk of SCC, and which are not.

I carried out an extensive literature survey and drafted the latest proposal to detail our current thoughts. A corrosion expert at the French Institute of Corrosion has been asked for some independent input. The intention is to submit a complete Standards Proposal for the 2014 meeting.

In addition, I have organised some long-term anchor exposure tests in Thailand where corrosion/SCC failures have been the worst. The results of these tests will obviously take a few years, but at least it is a start. We’ve used a mix of materials that are expected to fail quickly, with some that we expect to be quite resistant. In addition we plan similar tests in less severe locations like Greece and Hawaii.

#### **UIAA Youth Commission**

Corresponding Member: Mrs Jenny Paterson

After having been appointed - *in absentia* -GYS (Global Youth Summit) Events Co-Ordinator for the Youth Commission at its bi-annual meeting held in October 2012. This entailed many hours of enjoyable work but I felt that the position would be better served by someone who was a full member of the Youth Commission and who attended Youth Commission meetings, and not one far removed at the southernmost tip of Africa. The new Youth Commission President was approached by me with a request to be replaced as Events Co-Ordinator, and this was agreed to at the Youth Commission meeting that took place in Azerbaijan on 15 November 2013. I continue in my capacity as Corresponding Member.

See further report under Youth below.

#### **National MCSA Sub-committees:**

The Convenors of the National Portfolios continue to contribute their time and expertise. The MCSA wishes to record its appreciation to all of them. Their reports follow.

#### **Expeditions**

Convenor: Ulrike Kiefer

The sub-committee has the following members: Ian Bailey (KZN), Greg Devine (JHB), Russell Dodding (JHB), Alard Hufner (JHB), Ulrike Kiefer (convenor, JHB), Andre Schoon, Donovan van Graan and Julia Wakeling.

The aim of this sub-committee is to promote expeditions of members to mountains around the world. This is done in various ways: by providing some financial assistance, making available specialised equipment, giving logistical support or a combination of all of these.

MCSA members wishing to apply for sponsorship or support may do so by sending their completed application form to [expeditions@mcsa.org](mailto:expeditions@mcsa.org). This form and applicable guidelines are available from the MCSA website or from the Hon. Secretary - email: [secretary@mcsa.org.za](mailto:secretary@mcsa.org.za). Certain conditions apply and a full expedition report is expected from the expedition leader after their return.

There were no applications for support of any expeditions in 2013.

The expedition fund at present includes four Kenwood two-way radios with spare batteries, a hyperbaric pressure bag and a Thuraya satellite phone.

The balance available for grants on the Expedition Operating account is R17 073 as at 31 December 2013. The capital account stands at R183 615.

### **Information Technology**

Convenor: Michael van Breda

#### **Web Server**

The [mcsa.org.za](http://mcsa.org.za) URL continued to be hosted on a server that is managed by Roland Magg. There were no reported downtimes this past year. The site is deliberately light and easy to maintain and has been kept up to date with national and international news. One of its roles is to serve as a central repository of information regarding the Club and its activities. Another important role is to provide Search & Rescue information. The Club continues to support a Facebook site.

#### **e-Mails**

The e-mail system continued to be hosted on the [mcsa.org.za](http://mcsa.org.za) site. As in past years a number of sections are making use of forwarders. This provides a useful mechanism to keep e-mail addresses the same from year to year when committee members change. An ongoing problem is the rejection of Club e-mail sent to chairpersons using work addresses.

#### **e-News**

e-News was resuscitated in May after a lapse of two years with Bridget Carrick as the new editor. This is sent to the section mailing lists or chairmen each month for distribution to the membership. It is also posted on the national website.

#### **Sections**

All but three of the sections have moved off the server. Several have created attractive Google-based sites. Several have started their own Facebook pages. Your national co-ordinator is happy to report that each section seems to have found a satisfactory solution to communicating electronically.

#### **Journal**

Editor: Jenny Paterson

Editing sub-committee comprised: Lynn Bieheuvel; Annette van den Berg; Gary van Vuuren.

Members, and a few non-members, continue to submit interesting articles for our publication which still proves to be popular. About 60 complimentary copies are distributed worldwide to organisations like the Alpine Club; Royal Geographical Society; American Geographical Society library; British Library; Department of Environmental Affairs; Department of Sports & Recreation; WWF-SA; various South African public libraries and Universities; mountaineering Federations worldwide and in Africa; the International Mountaineering Museum in Nepal. We still depend on advertisers and thank the likes of Drifters Adventure Centre; Cape Union Mart; RAM Mountaineering; Dream World Adventures and Performance Brands (formerly First Ascent) for their loyal support over the years which has helped us keep the Journal cost to Sections static for the past few years and we are constantly looking for new advertisers.

**MCSA Supertramp Award**

Co-ordinator: Ms Petro Grobler

As mentioned in the previous Annual Report, the 2012 MCSA Supertramp, Alasdair Walton, left for Colombia in late December 2012 together with his partner, Bryian Meenehan. However, due to Alasdair’s illness two weeks into the expedition, the expedition was aborted and Alasdair returned whilst Bryian Meenehan continued.

Seven applications were received for the 2013 Award and it was awarded to MCSA member, Duncan Fraser. Together with Benjamin de Charmoy and Leonard le Roux, they opened a new nine-pitch 300-metre route, Dancing with Wolves (23), on the Tsaranoro Massif in Madagascar. Subsequently slide shows were presented to the KwaZulu-Natal and Cape Town Sections; the latter was on their initiative used as a fund-raiser for the MCSA Expeditions Fund.

Any South African citizen under 25-years-old can apply by year end for this award for up to R15 000 for an adventure in the following year. An evaluation panel under the auspices of the Magaliesberg Section assesses the applications and administers the Award.

**Mountain Conservation**

Convenor: Maretha Alant

Combined with the UIAA Mountain Protection (Conservation) Report above.

**Search and Rescue**

Convenor: Rob Thomas

**Composition**

The composition of the Sub-committee was changed slightly. The committee member for rescue of each section that fields a rescue team was automatically added to the committee. The sub-committee comprised:

Mr Rob Thomas	Chair, IKAR Flight Rescue Representative
Mr Mike Klopper	Johannesburg
Mr Dean van der Merwe	Magaliesberg
Mr Gavin Raubenheimer	KwaZulu-Natal
Mr Tim Jones	Eastern Cape
Mr Andrew Scott	South Cape
Ms Gela Tölken	Hottentots Holland
Mr David Nel, Mr Andrew Wood	Cape Town
Dr Rik de Decker	IKAR Medical Representative
Mr Lester Coelen	Search management advice
Mr Brent Jennings	Technical rescue advice

## **Funding**

During 2012 there was again a substantial donation from the Dept of Transport in the form of an annual grant. This grant is a recurring one which helps considerably with the preparation of the rescue teams. The original grant was valid for five years and was renegotiated during 2011.

## **Liaisons and memberships**

Organisations with which the MCSA maintains a relationship in a rescue-specific context include :

- a. SASAR Aeronautical Sub Committee (under the SA Dept of Transport)
- b. IKAR (International Commission for Alpine Rescue) Flight Rescue and Medical Sub Commissions

## **Sub-committee activities**

A decision was taken to schedule a National SAR meet in the Magaliesberg for 2013 to be run by the Gauteng team. This event took place over the period 14 – 17 March, based out of Mountain Sanctuary Park, whose management waived their noise rules for the weekend and effectively allowed MCSA to book out the entire campsite for the weekend. Members of all but the South Cape team participated, as well as crews from 17 and 19 Squadrons. The Off Road Rescue Unit kindly assisted with the logistics and also joined in for some of the training scenarios while catering was spectacularly well handled by Sandy Beekhuizen (Jhb section).

A number of valuable lessons were learnt from an organisational point of view. These lessons were documented so as to ensure that they are available to committees organising subsequent national SAR training meets.

The Sub Committee also convened a Board of Enquiry into the incident which occurred at Wolkberg when a member of the Off Road Rescue Unit sustained a severe fall during a helicopter training session. In response to this incident both MCSA SAR (National) and the SA Air Force have constituted boards of enquiry. The findings of SAR board will be finalized early in 2014. Russell is recovering well from his fall.

A bulk purchase of rope was also made, ensuring that teams have adequate stock of good quality rope. The process of re-equipping the Eastern Cape team has also been completed.

## **Team activity**

Teams remained active with a variety of rescues. Most teams reported an increase in call-outs over preceding years, with KZN team reporting a substantial increase in the number of technical rescues. HH and CT are engaged in mutual assistance and report an increase in the number of rescues, especially those where the AMS (Air Medical Services) helicopter is unavailable or unable to perform the rescue.

The scope of calls has also broadened. The Gauteng team has increasingly found itself being called upon by other services to augment existing capability and has consequently found itself performing occasional urban rescues such as a vehicle over the edge of a bridge or assisting the SAAF in conducting flood rescues, during which 15 000 additional crocodiles had ended up being released into the waters when the crocodile farms flooded.

As usual the aviation community has been the recipient of MCSA SAR's services on a number of occasions.

The EC team is stabilising but is finding it challenging to deal with the apparently entrenched bias of Local Government towards former team members who have set up an independent mountain rescue team.

Some members of teams attended a Rigging For Rescue workshop in their private capacity. This workshop was presented by Mike Gibbs in the Magaliesberg the week after the National Meet.

### **Youth**

Convenor: Jenny Paterson

Committee members: Steve Cooke (KwaZulu-Natal), Uschi Magg (Johannesburg) and Gary van Vuuren (Magaliesberg).

After much deliberation it was agreed in June to cancel - or preferably postpone - the Youth Leader Training Course that was scheduled to be run during the week 25 - 31 August 2013, mainly due to lack of participants. A request was made to the UIAA Youth Commission to postpone the event till 2014 and permission for this was given in late December 2013.

It is hoped that MCSA Sections, especially those with youth activities, will support this event in 2014.

### **Activities**

#### **Annual Dinner**

The dinner was hosted by the Stellenbosch Section - which celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year - at the magnificent Clos Malverne Restaurant in the Devon Valley. A very successful occasion attended by 74 guests, and speaker Stephen Venables the guest speaker. At this event Pieter Diener was awarded honorary membership of the Section in honour of his dedicated service to the Section over the past 30 years.

#### **Annual Memorial Service**

The Annual Memorial Service led by Ds Barend Nel from the Tygerberg Section, was held on 24 February 2013 at Maclear's Beacon on Table Mountain. The Act of Remembrance was read by Brian Lambourne, Chairman of the Cape Town Section. The service was well attended.

#### **National Meet**

Congratulations were extended to SC Section organising committee and to Bill Uren and his team, for hosting a successful Meet. About 65 members registered to attend and some 75 people attended the braai on the last night.

#### **In Memoriam**

South Africans collectively were saddened by the death of former President Nelson Mandela whose death still came as a shock, despite his long illness. A letter of condolences from MCSA President Petro Grobler was delivered to the family home in Houghton.

#### **Achievements/Congratulations**

To Vincent Carruthers, on being awarded the Chancellor's Medal Award from North-West University.

#### **Centenary celebrations**

Letters of congratulations were sent to Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens and The Botanical Society of South Africa which celebrated their centenary anniversaries.

#### **Kirstenbosch Silver Tree planting ceremony**

The Silver Tree Restoration Project aims to secure the future of the endangered Silver Tree (*Leucadendron argenteum*) as an icon of biodiversity conservation on Table Mountain. Partners in this historic legacy project include South African National Parks (SANParks), South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI), the Botanical Society of South Africa (BotSoc), the Millennium Seed Bank Partnership (KEW) and E Oppenheimer and Son South Africa.

The MCSA was represented at the event by Cape Town Section members Marian Oliver (Gecom), Ian Bradburn, Jenny Barber, John Wilson and Lucille Krige. The Club was honoured to have been invited to participate in this BotSoc and Kirstenbosch centenary celebratory event.

Thousands of saplings now line the newly dubbed 'Silver Tree Avenue' from Kirstenbosch National Botanical Garden's Rycroft Gate to the historic Cork Oak planting where Southern Cross Drive meets Rhodes Drive. These saplings will be monitored and cared for as they grow, creating a beautifully shaded walkway. Ultimately the Avenue will extend as far as Constantia Nek.

#### **Swiss Alpine Club and Club Alpino Italiano**

Both these Alpine Clubs celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their establishment. Both have been very active, involved members of the UIAA and over the years offered many initiatives which were open to other Federations. Letters of congratulations were sent to both.

#### **SA National Parks Kudu Awards**

Congratulations to Christa van Schalkwyk, an MCSA Magaliesberg committee member for Conservation, who works at the Walter Sisulu Environmental Centre (WSEC). The WSEC won The SA National Parks Kudu Awards in the Environmental education category! The WSEC was the 2012 beneficiary of the Richard Watmough Fund, administered by the Magaliesberg Section.

#### **Stephen Venables Lecture Tour**

Stephen Venables first visited South Africa in 1991 as guest of the MCSA in its centenary year. The interest raised by his lectures, presented to MCSA Sections around the country, resulted in a second lecture tour three years later and now, twenty-two years later, his third.

Five MCSA Sections hosted Stephen: Magaliesberg, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, two lectures were also arranged in conjunction with the FEAT (Fascinating Expedition Adventure Talks) organisation, one in Cape Town and the other in Johannesburg, which attracted audiences from both the MCSA and the general public. This collaboration with FEAT gave the MCSA access to hundreds of adventurers not members of the MCSA, whom otherwise we would not have been able to target.

Despite his busy lecture schedule, Stephen managed to fit in some climbing, although the planned highlight - an ascent of the Devil's Tooth in the Drakensberg followed by a Tyrolean traverse across to the summit of the Inner Tower - had to be cancelled because of bad weather.

Sincere thanks go to those Sections that did host Stephen and for the warm welcome extended to him when he got there - he was delighted to have made contact again with many long-standing friends and acquaintances. Thanks too to Paul Fatti who unstintingly gave of his time to drive Stephen around and also accommodated him when he was in Johannesburg.