

INTRODUCTION

In this the first number of our quarterly magazine, "The Coelacanth", it is fitting to turn our minds back to the first steps taken to form an historical society in East London. The Society was formed at a public meeting held in the Council Chamber, City Hall, on July 28th, 1960. The meeting, convened by the then Mayor of East London, Cr. W.P. Osmond, was one at which progress was reported following on the establishing here of a branch of the Simon van der Stel Foundation the previous year, also under chairmanship of Mr. Osmond. It was felt, however, that historical matters in East London and on the Border generally, would be best served by a local body and consequently the meeting formed an independent body and proceeded to elect an executive committee.

It is interesting to note that seven members of the present committee were included in the first "working committee" of 1960. They are the Chairman, Mr. Mark Taylor, the Vice-Chairman, Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer and Messrs G.G. Smith, H. Urling Smith, H.H. Driffield, Dr. A.J. Ballantyne, and the P.R.O., Mr. D.J.J. Pretorius. The first secretary, Mr. Egan Hutton, has since left East London and Miss Sylvia Dickie was elected in his stead and still carries out this onerous duty with dilligence and perseverance.

Attempts to float a branch here of the S.A. Historical Association (Headquarters at Pretoria) through the Skakelkomitee and the efforts of Mr. Pretorius, failed owing to lack of interest.

Our Name.

The name of our magazine may sound out of the ordinary for an historical bulletin. But the explanation is very simple. Since the East London Museum has been chosen as headquarters of the Border

Historical Society and all our meetings are held there with the fullest co-operation and interest of the chairman of the Museum Board of Trust, Mr. G.G. Smith, and the Director Miss M. Courtenay-Latimer, it was felt that somehow the Museum should be linked with the dissemination of historical notes.

As the chief exhibit in the Museum is the pre-historic fish, the Coelacanth, through which the East London Museum has gained world renown, and because it was trawled near East London and its identification by the famous Ichthyologist of Grahamstown, Professor J.L.B. Smith, startled the world, the Society felt that no more apt title could be carried by a magazine purporting to convey knowledge of the past to the present, than the name of "Old Fourlegs" - the famous Coelacanth. Hence its adoption as name-piece for our historical digest.

The Editor