

# 1972 BP ANTARCTIC GOLD MEDAL

## PROFESSOR E. M. VAN ZINDEREN BAKKER

Professor Eduard M. van Zinderen Bakker, Head of the Department of Botany at the University of the Orange Free State, has a long-standing interest in the sub-Antarctic Marion and Prince Edward Islands. It was he who realised the unique opportunities offered by these islands for research and who was the moving spirit behind, and the leader of, the South African Biological/Geological Expedition to Marion and Prince Edward Islands in 1965/66 when the islands were visited by a team of geologists and biologists.

Prof. van Zinderen Bakker is tremendously enthusiastic and adventurous, and has a great knowledge about the scientific programme. His perseverance in the execution of his work is exemplified by his numerous publications which included his recent outstanding volume entitled *Marion and Prince Edward Islands* (A. A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1971) edited in conjunction with Dr. R. A. Dyer and Prof. J. M. Winterbottom. Without doubt he has done much to promote international scientific interest in Marion and the sub-Antarctic islands. He has travelled widely and has participated in the scientific activities of international bodies in the fields of palaeobotany and palaeoclimatology. He is the South African representative on the Working Group on Biology of SCAR (the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research of the International Council of Scientific Unions) and Chairman of its Committee of Specialists on Quaternary Research. In the latter capacity he was convener of an international symposium on Quaternary Studies in the Antarctic at Cambridge, England in 1968. He is also the director of a research programme on "ecological energetics" on the islands which was initiated in 1971/72 as part of the South African Antarctic Research Programme. He holds the Order of Orange Nassau.

The award of the 1972 BP Antarctic Gold Medal to Prof. E. M. van Zinderen Bakker is a fitting tribute to his vision, endeavour, and contribution to our scientific knowledge.



*Professor E. M. van Zinderen Bakker.*

## MR. P. A. LE ROUX

Mr. Piet A. le Roux, a member of the Department of Transport's Weather Bureau, first went to the sub-Antarctic islands as expedition leader of the 1961/62 Marion Island campaign, during which time he offered to lead the succeeding expedition. Upon his return he spent two weeks in the Republic and then sailed as expedition leader of the 1962/63 campaign to Gough Island, one of the primary tasks being the building of a new base. The design, planning, and erection was done by the Department of Public Works. Mr. le Roux was instrumental in having the scientific equipment moved from the old base to the new one. A monumental task over hazardous terrain under extremely difficult conditions was completed without loss of any equipment or life and enabled the incoming expedition to carry out their research work without any delay.

When the news was received of the death of the 1963/64 Gough Island expedition leader, Mr. Johan Smalberger, Mr. le Roux was asked to take over as expedition leader. He was accompanied by a team of Cape Coloureds and a State pathologist, and in a precipitous area under deteriorating weather conditions the body was recovered. It took great leadership ability to hold the Cape Coloureds together. He and his team returned to the Republic in May, 1964.

In September, 1965, the base on Marion Island was destroyed by fire, followed by radio silence. Mr. le Roux sailed with a commission of enquiry and worked in close collaboration with its leader. In view of his knowledge of Gough Island he had to write a report on how the Marion Island base could be safe-guarded against such dangers. His terms of reference were to assist the expedition's leader in re-establishing the scientific programme, and to be prepared to stay on as leader if necessary. This was not necessary although he was prepared to spend another season on the island.

In 1969 two members of the Gough Island expedition died of exposure. Within minutes of the news being received Mr. le Roux was given 24 hours' notice to leave for Cape Town to lead a party to recover the bodies. Conditions on the island where the men had died were boggy and marshy, the bodies were two months old, and only half the recovering party was fit to go into the mountains.

The 1972 BP Antarctic Gold Medal is awarded to Mr. P. A. le Roux for his leadership abilities and devotion to service, at times under the most unpleasant circumstances.

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*Mr. P. A. le Roux.*