

## *George Allan Chadwick (1923–2000)*

George Chadwick, who died in Durban in August one day short of his 87th birthday, made a distinguished contribution to the study, preservation and popularisation of historical sites.

He grew up in the wilds of Quedeni in Zululand, acquiring a remarkable fluency in Zulu as well as English and Afrikaans. He was not for nothing a descendant of the missionary James Archbell, appointed by the Voortrekkers as their first dominee, for he was equally at home in English- or Afrikaans-speaking company. Educated at Maritzburg College – to reach school he had to start his journey by ox-wagon – and the then Natal University College, he began his teaching career at Glencoe in northern Natal.

Chadwick saw service in World War 2 with the Rand Light Infantry, with whom he fought at El Alamein. While in the Middle East he became fascinated by the relics of history all around him and it was while attached to a training unit in Alexandria that he gained his first experience in tour guiding, dodging the minefields in taking visitors to the El Alamein battlefield.

After the war he taught at Dundee High School, was vice-principal at Hoërskool Port Natal and headmaster of Queensburgh High School before promotion to the inspectorate in 1965, in which position he had special responsibility for the teaching of history. In this capacity Chadwick made a major impact on the way history was studied in the province, encouraging teachers and pupils to use the environment as a source of information and to go to actual sites – not only battlefields but places like mission stations, old farms, roads and cemeteries – to see who did what where.

Besides encouraging his teachers and leading innumerable field trips himself, Chadwick produced a series of informative pamphlets covering early Zulu history, the Voortrekkers in Natal, the two Anglo-Boer wars and other aspects of KwaZulu-Natal history. Chadwick

served for many years as the Natal representative on the National Monuments' Council (as it then was), identifying new places of historical significance, as well as supervising the upkeep of monuments and historical sites in the province in conjunction with the provincial Department of Works.

Chadwick was also a skilled organiser of festivals and commemorations such as those marking the centenaries of the Anglo-Zulu War (in 1979) and the first Anglo-Boer War (in 1981). Even in retirement, and well into his eighties, he chaired the Durban Metro Committee for the recent centenary celebration of the second Anglo-Boer War.

One of his young teachers said of him: 'When it came to historical sites, George Chadwick was virtually omniscient. Specialist academic historians might have had more detailed knowledge of circumscribed areas, but nobody could rival the breadth of his knowledge.'

Chadwick leaves his wife Freda, children Anne, Ruth and Allan and six grandchildren.



*George Chadwick*