

Valerie Fay O'Hagan Ward (1935–2016)

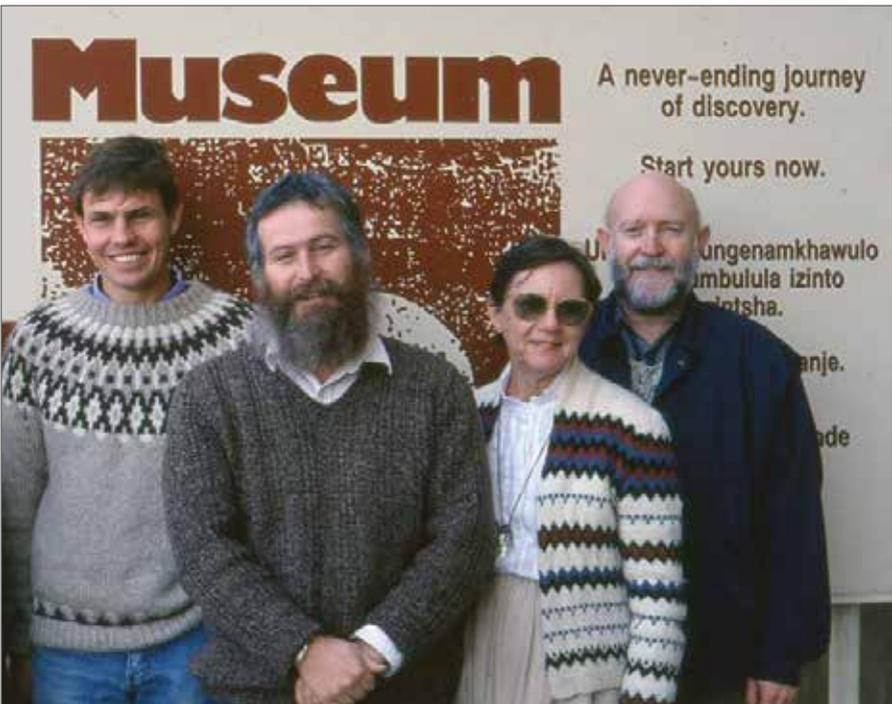
VAL Ward (née Higgs) was born and educated in Durban. On matriculating she trained and worked as a medical technologist. She met a Durban doctor who, with his widowed mother and some of his siblings, was a fairly recent immigrant from Ireland. Val and Anthony O'Hagan Ward were married in London. On their return from England they set up home in Glenashley.

In the 1970s the couple moved to Hong Kong where they lived for five years. Regulations precluded Val from gainful employment and this is when she became interested in archaeology. It was also when their marriage went awry.

On her return to Durban Val first did voluntary work and then in 1980 became a member of staff in the Archaeology

Department of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg. Here she made a significant contribution in research, collection management and the mentoring of young members of staff. She was a member of the South African Archaeology Society and for many years served on the Natal branch committee as secretary and editor of the newsletter *Gnews*. In 1999 Val was awarded the society's Presidential Award for exceptional service to archaeology.

In retirement Val concentrated on family research, making many trips to England to follow the roots of her British ancestors. In South Africa she traced her forebears back to Louis van Bengale, an Indian freed slave at the Cape. She was expert in genealogical research techniques and unstintingly assisted researchers new to this field.



Val Ward, with (from left) Gavin Whitelaw, Aaron Mazel and Tim Maggs

Over the last 12 years Val contributed six items to *Natalia*. They ranged in subject from the identification of “Ergates”, whose notes occasionally appeared in an early Natal journal, to the building of early European settler homes in KwaZulu-Natal. Their main thrust, however, was about the lives of European settler women in Natal.

Val had friends on every continent and from many walks of life, and she will always be remembered by them for her warmth and loyalty over many years.

BRIAN SPENCER

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Gavin Whitelaw and Tim Maggs)