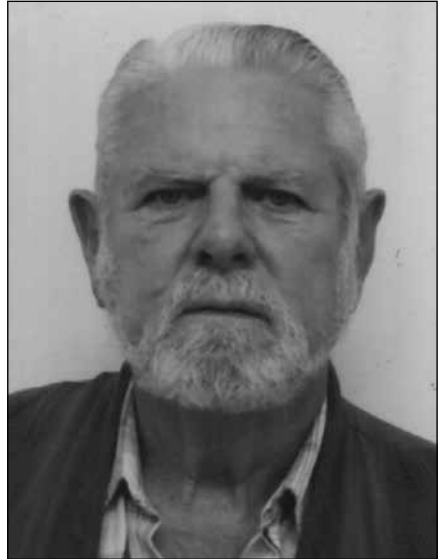


## *Edwin Athol Webster (1931–2015)*

THE death occurred in Hillcrest in September 2015 of Athol Webster, widely recognised as a pioneer of commercial mushroom growing, certainly in Natal and perhaps in South Africa. Athol developed his interest in growing mushrooms as a boy, when his father responded to an article offering for sale quantities of mushroom spawn from America. As he grew older, young Athol became more and more involved in his father's hobby. After completing his education in Durban, Athol entered an engineering apprenticeship with Dunlop in Durban until eight years later he was able to devote all his energies and skills to growing mushrooms on his own account. After farming initially at the foot of Botha's Hill, in 1960 he took over *Braeside*, the only other mushroom farm in the area, to the north of Hillcrest. Despite a serious setback when his sheds were destroyed by fire, Webster persevered with expansion. His development of a site at Waterfall made him the largest producer of mushrooms in Natal and perhaps in the country. This development attracted the attention of the business sector and, after a brief



association with Protea Holdings, his operation was purchased in 1976 by the Tongaat group. Athol Webster is survived by his widow, Cheryl, three daughters, five grandchildren and one great-grandson.

PETER TENNANT

(From information provided  
by Robin Lamplough)

