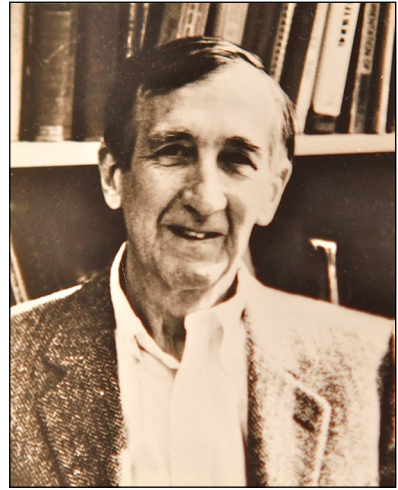


This account is largely focussed on the activities of W. G. Evans during his years at the University of Alberta. Activities during prior years are summarized in “Entomologists of Alberta” (Riegert, 1989: 24).

“George”, as he was known to close associates, was born in Swansea, Wales, where he received his elementary education before moving to the USA. He attended Cornell University, receiving his BSA in 1952, MSc in 1954, and PhD in 1956, taking up a faculty position at the University of Alberta in 1958. On 1 September 1988, George retired as a Professor from the Department of Entomology, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Alberta. For the 30 years that George was a department member, he lectured in Insect Toxicology, Applied Entomology, Insect Ecology, and Forest Entomology. For much of that period, he served as Director of the Department’s George Lake Entomological Field Station. In 1962, George served as President of the Entomological Society of Alberta.



**William G. Evans
(1923 - 2015)**

At the graduate level of education, he was primary advisor of 23 students, each of whom he encouraged to investigate ecological aspects of insects that the student, through previous observation or reading, found especially appealing or challenging. Resulting theses in total informed about members of eight insect orders, and treated subjects ranging from autecological reproductive behavior to community ecology of parasitoids and even systematics of aquatic shore bugs.

In addition to guiding the programs of his students, George carried on his own research. He is best described as an experimental ecologist, with an intense interest in chemical and physical aspects of orientation. His experimental work was careful and thorough and when it led into the realm of morphology George proved to be adept and skillful in the application of microanatomical tools.

He was well known for his studies of infrared radiation in relation to the buprestid beetle species *Melanophila acuminata* DeGeer. George discovered and described the infrared receptors in the adults of that species, making it possible for them to find and exploit forest fires especially as sites for reproductive activity (Evans, 1964).

Much of his field work was undertaken in the Alberta prairie, in the vicinity of the characteristic alkali ponds (sloughs), where George’s observations and experiments demonstrated that the resident carabid beetles and saldid bugs recognized their habitats through chemical mediation.

The intertidal arthropod fauna of the Pacific Coast attracted George’s attention. In 1968, he took part in Cruise 18 of Stanford Oceanic Expeditions that surveyed the Pacific coastline from Mexico to Peru. By-products of his efforts were discovery of a new genus and species of saldid bug (*Paralosalda innova* Polhemus and Evans), and a tachyine carabid (*Tachysbembix* sp.), awaiting description.

Additionally, George investigated the way of life of the intertidal, crevice-inhabiting pogonine carabid beetle species, *Thalassotrechus barbarae* Van Dyke, discovering how its activity is regulated by circadian and circatidal rhythms, noting that “this is the first record of an essentially terrestrial animal that has an endogenous tidal activity rhythm”. An extension of his interest in

the intertidal arthropods is summarized in Evans (1980).

The tragic Californian Santa Barbara Oil Spill of 1969 attracted George's attention. His investigation led to the discovery that the heavily oiled high intertidal zone near Santa Barbara was bereft of its population of *T. barbara*e, and of other characteristic intertidal invertebrate residents. Expressing his beliefs and concerns about conservation, George concluded this paper as follows: ".....it is about time for biologists and conservationists to become just as concerned about the effects of pollution on insects and other invertebrates as on the more familiar larger animals" (Evans, 1970: 90).

Like most entomologists of his era, George Evans pursued his science with enjoyment and quiet enthusiasm, emotions he was anxious to share with others, and in particular with those who regarded themselves as amateurs. In his Presidential address to the members who attended the 1962 meeting of the Entomological Society of Alberta he stated: "There are so many insects yet to be described and so little we know of the vast majority that are named that we need all the help we can get. I therefore state for the record of the Proceedings of the Society that we need amateurs and we should encourage them as much as we can". True to those words, in subsequent years, the Society did encourage amateurism, even welcoming some of them to its executive ranks, including that of President.

As Professor Emeritus at the University of Alberta, George continued his research for many years, publishing his final paper at the age of 87 (Evans, 2010).

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