

## Alwyn Bradley Ewen (1932-2008)

Alwyn ('Al') Bradley Ewen passed away unexpectedly on 25 September, 2008, in Saskatoon's Royal University Hospital, aged 75.

Al was born on 24 October, 1932, in Radisson, Saskatchewan, where his father, a Scottish emigrant, was the bookkeeper at the local grain mill. In the late 1930s, Al's family moved to Saskatoon where he completed his school education. In 1947, he enrolled in pre-medical studies at the University of Saskatchewan, but after a year switched to biochemistry. As luck would have it, he worked as a summer student for Don Rawson, the well-known limnologist, and quickly changed course again, to complete a B.A. degree with Honors in Biology.

At this stage, Al may well have become a fisheries biologist, having worked for the Fisheries Research Board at Victoria Beach on Lake Winnipeg, where his main observation was that "fishing was never so good", and for the Saskatchewan Department of Natural Resources, Fisheries Branch, at Ile a la Cross. Here, he was exposed (literally!) to northern biting flies, which pricked his curiosity (and probably other things as well), leading him to undertake a M.A. degree under the supervision of Les Saunders at the University of Saskatchewan. For his M.A. thesis "Contributions toward a revision of the genus *Atrichopogon* based on characters of all stages (Diptera, Heleidae)" (Heleidae = Ceratopogonidae), Al attempted to determine useful taxonomic characters for separating species, using larval, pupal and adult features. His study included 18 species, 5 of which were from near Saskatoon but the rest had been collected by Saunders from around the world. Despite working on the genus for some years, Al remained puzzled by the very name and in his thesis (p.2) noted: "The name *Atrichopogon* itself is mystifying, for it indicates an impossible situation: a beard ("pogon") without ("a") hairs ("tricho")."



After completing his M.A. in 1957, Al joined the staff at the Canada Agriculture Research Station in Saskatoon, where he was given responsibility for investigating the physiology of environmental adaptation in immigrant pest insects. To acquire the background in this area, Al with his first wife Marjorie and young son Rick moved to Edmonton where he registered in a Ph.D. program in the Department of Entomology, University of Alberta. Here, under the joint supervision of Brian Hocking and George Ball, Al spent the next 3 years looking at the induction and termination of diapause in insects and correlating these events with changes in the endocrine system.

With his thesis research completed, Al returned to Saskatoon in 1960, though by now his family numbered four, following the arrival of a second son, Doug. He received his Ph.D. in 1961, for the thesis "Studies on neurosecretion in the alfalfa plant bug, *Adelphocoris lineolatus* (Goeze) (Hemiptera: Miridae)."

Over the next decade and a half, Al undertook a comprehensive program on the physiology of reproduction in insects, using the alfalfa plant bug and the migratory grasshopper (*Melanoplus sanguinipes* Fabr.). An enjoyable and productive component of this work was the collaboration between Al and the recently appointed insect physiologist at the University of Saskatchewan, Cedric Gillott. Clearly, the latter's strange accent made a major impression on Al who very quickly adopted the habit of greeting his collaborator with " 'ello m'duck" (unfortunately, sounding like a Cockney rather than a Yorkshireman!).

In the mid-1970s, Al undertook another major change in research direction, turning to applied entomology, specifically crop and rangeland grasshopper control, initially using synthetic pesticides, then potential pathogens such as *Nosema* spp. and *Malameba locustae*. In an effort to get away from the non-specific effects and wastefulness of insecticide spraying, Al and his collaborators examined whether the efficacy of insecticides (including microbials) could be improved if they were formulated as dry, edible baits. This was easily the most productive phase of Al's career, with more than 20 publications, co-authored by colleagues at the Saskatoon Research Station (Mukul Mukerji and Chris Hinks), the University of Saskatchewan (Jim Germida), the University of Regina (Paul Riegert) and the University of Wyoming (Jeff Lockwood). As well, Al enjoyed a new role as co-supervisor (with Cedric Gillott) of two M.Sc. students, Lorraine Braun and Martin Erlandson.

Al was a strong supporter of entomology at both provincial and national levels. He was elected the Entomological Society of Saskatchewan's President for 1962-63, and was a major force in the establishment of the Arthur R. Brooks Memorial Prize, awarded annually to an outstanding graduate student in Entomology registered at one of the Province's universities. He was also a long-time member of the Entomological Society of Canada, and served as Scientific Editor for *The Canadian Entomologist* between November 1985 and December 1993.

Al had a wry sense of humour, which was evident on my very first visit to his office. There, on the door jamb, was a beautiful little hand-made sign – the kind that one sees at service counters in department stores and government offices – complete with two little brass hooks holding numbers and the words "Please take a number (247). Now serving (21)"! Al was also a great lover of puns, and many of us on his e-mail list would receive these regularly. A small selection of these follows in the tribute presented by Robin Leech.

Golf was also another major love of Al's life, though the origin of this affair was unusual to say the least. Early in life, Al had a severe lung infection that required major surgery. To aid the normal regrowth of the back muscles damaged by the operation, Al was urged to take up golf, which he played with a fierce passion (and eventually a single-figure handicap). Harvey Craig, a long-time colleague and golf buddy, recalls how Al always played the first two holes of a round with great care, taking overly much time in the view of some fellow players. Al's response was quite direct: "There's no point in ruining a round of golf in the first two holes." His commitment to the sport extended to even having his golf shoes custom-made. Many a fine afternoon found Al out surveying turfgrass for 'golf eggs'. Once he wistfully commented that if only there were *Melanoplus sanguinipes* in Hawaii, he could transfer there and golf year round! There is also a rumour, completely unfounded of course, that Al's main delight at having two sons was that he could use them as caddies and ball-shaggers from an early age! Apparently, Rick and Doug, each armed with a ball glove, were sent out into the rough, about 200 yards from the tee, to catch the golf balls that Dad hit to them for hours on end! Al continued to golf until about 2 years ago when knee problems forced him to retire from the sport. It was highly fitting that, after his death, the opportunity to pay tribute to, and reminisce about, Al took place at his home-away-from-home, the Saskatoon Golf and Country Club.

Al will be greatly missed by his wife Ruth, his sons Rick and Doug, their mother Marjorie, his grandchildren and great grandchildren, and numerous colleagues and friends. Wherever he now resides, there had better be a golf course!

- Cedric Gillott, with contributions from Lorraine Braun, Martin Erlandson, Harvey Craig and Rick Ewen.