

WILLIAM D. TAYLOR

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**Hugh Bernard Noel Hynes**  
**1917-2009**



Noel Hynes was born in 1917, in Devizes, Wiltshire, England into a family with a long connection to India. His father Claude had been an officer in the Gurkha Rifles and joined the Royal Flying Corps when he returned to England. His mother Anna, of German ancestry but raised in Russia, was a teacher and the source of Noel's love of language and languages. Noel was educated at Imperial College, now part of University of London (BSc 1938, PhD 1941, DSc 1958) and he obtained honorary doctorates from University of London, University of New Brunswick, and University of Waterloo.

Like his father, Noel Hynes began his career serving overseas, first in Trinidad learning tropical biology and then in East Africa with the locust control program. He spent the war years travelling in the wilds of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, trying to understand the origin and control of locust outbreaks. Between Trinidad and East Africa he married Mary Hinks in 1942, and she later joined him in East Africa where they started their family. Their first son Richard was born in Nairobi in 1944, followed by Elizabeth, Andrew and Julian. Noel and Mary remained a devoted couple until her passing in 1999.

On returning to England he accepted a lectureship at Liverpool University in 1947. In 1964, he was persuaded leave Britain to join the fledgling University of Waterloo as its first Chair of Biology. He described the University of Waterloo on his first visit as "a couple of buildings and two sheds in the middle of a muddy field". Despite what must have been onerous administrative duties, he remained scientifically productive and anchored the reputation of the new Department of Biology as it grew. He retired from University of Waterloo in 1984 as Distinguished Professor Emeritus, and remained in Waterloo until moving to Knowlton, Quebec, shortly before his passing on March 2nd, 2009.

Noel Hynes' scientific passion was the Plecoptera, or stoneflies, but for most of the scientific community he is known for his contributions to stream ecology. Two books, "The biology of polluted waters" published in 1960 and *The ecology of running waters* published in 1970 were immensely successful. Almost as influential was the paper he delivered to the International Society of Limnology (SIL) as the Elgardo Baldi Memorial Lecturer in 1974. It was simply titled, "The stream and its valley", and it summarized a holistic view of streams as parts of a larger ecosystem, the drainage basin. He and his students published on many topics, but especially the mechanisms by which terrestrial vegetation supported stream food webs, and the connection between streams and the groundwater through the hyporheic zone below the streambed. The connections between streams and their valleys remains an important focus of limnological research today. In 1998, he was awarded the Einar Naumann-August Thienemann Medal, SIL's highest award, for "establishment of the field of lotic limnology as a major, rich and varied discipline, and for wide-ranging contributions that brought innovative research, insight, and synthesis to all aspects of lotic ecosystems for six decades." His last book (Hynes 2001) is an inspiring autobiography, *Nunc Dimittus: a life in the river of time*.

During his long career, and in addition to his books, Noel Hynes published 179 scientific papers, along with numerous book chapters, reports and articles. He became a fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1978. He was also a fellow of the Institute of Biology (UK) and the American Society for the Advancement of Science. Awards he received include the Canadian Centenary Medal (1967), the Colonel Hilary Jolly Award of the Australian Society of Limnology (1985), the Award of Excellence from the North American Benthological Society (1988), and

the aforementioned Einar Nauman-August Theinemann Medal of the International Society of Limnology.

Those who were fortunate enough to know Noel will remember that he referred to himself modestly as an "entomologist who went wrong". When praised for his accomplishments, he would cite hard work as if it were one's duty and to be expected. He trained many students and post-docs who went on to staff universities around the world after benefitting from his subtle criticism, dry humour, unconventional wisdom and engaging stories about a life of field work in exotic places. A tireless advocate for clear and precise scientific communication, he was especially helpful to foreign students and colleagues struggling with English and he continued to edit throughout his retirement.

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*(Author's title given as of the time of writing)*