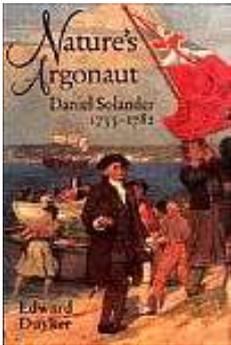


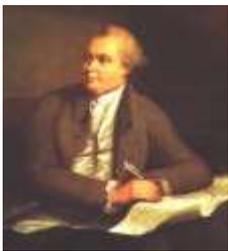
Uncovering Daniel Solander 1733–1782

Edward Duyker
Discovery Centre, Kurnell,
Wednesday, 26 March 2008



It is ten years since *Nature's Argonaut*, my biography of Daniel Solander was published. Indeed it was launched here in the Sutherland Shire in 1998. At the time I thanked the Sutherland Shire

Library service for all the help they had given me and for all the inter-library loans they had organized for me. I also reflected on the fact that the *Endeavour* was a remarkable floating library when she arrived here at Botany Bay, and that a great many of the books that we know were aboard her were still available in our local library, but, of course, in modern editions.



Daniel Solander

One could add that the books written aboard the *Endeavour* in the form of journals by Cook, Banks and Parkinson are also held in our library. And, now, so too is my biography of Solander.

Indeed, I am well aware that many of you will have read it; so today I don't want to simply repeat Solander's story. What I

want to do is tell you something about the process of uncovering this story of the first Swede to circle the globe who was also one of the pioneers of the natural sciences in the Pacific. In doing so, you will see that while manuscripts and published sources



Björklunda

are crucial to an historian, so too is actually visiting the places he or she writes about.

Daniel Solander was born in 1733, in Piteå, just south of the Arctic circle on the Gulf of Bothnia. He was not baptised Daniel Carl Solander (as one so often sees in reference works), rather he later adopted the middle name 'Carlsson' to distinguish himself from his uncle, also named Daniel. Solander's father, Carl, like his grandfather, was the local vicar. His mother Magdalena Bostadia was the daughter of a provincial Chief Justice. Although the house in which Daniel was born has been demolished, the house in which he grew up, 'Björklunda', still stands. It was built shortly after the town was burnt to the ground by Russian raiders during the Great Northern War. The Solanders were one of the few educated families of this sparsely populated frontier Arctic region. It is not surprising that, in the year before Daniel was born, his parents hosted Carl Linnaeus during his famous Lapland journey. Solander's father was also an

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amateur scientist. He provided astronomical observations for the Royal Society of Sciences in Uppsala and was visited by members of Pierre de Maupertuis' important geophysical expedition—including Anders Celsius (of centigrade fame)—seeking to prove Newtonian theory that the earth was an oblate spheroid during observations in 1736 and 1737. (There is frequently an element of serendipity in historical discoveries, I chanced upon this detail quite by accident, in 1992, while reading a rare work by another member of Maupertuis's expedition, the naturalist Abbé Reginald Outhier, during a visit to the Lapponica Collection in the Rovaniemi City Library in northern Finland!)

We do not know how early young Daniel developed an interest in natural history, but it seems likely that it was nurtured by his father, although he, himself, would later credit his physician friend Johan Gustaf Hallman, author of a thesis on passionfruit. Given Carl Solander's (and Hallman's) personal friendship with Carl Linnaeus, it is perhaps not surprising that in 1750, Daniel began to study natural history under the great master himself. Solander lived in Uppsala for nine years with his uncle, Daniel, who was Professor of

Jurisprudence and intermittently rector of the university, but spent most of his free time with Linnaeus' family. He even fell in love with Linnaeus' eldest daughter, Lisa Stina, and was heartbroken when he was prevented from marrying her—but more of this later.

Like many biographers, I relied very heavily on my subject's personal correspondence. Indeed, between 1992 and 1995, I worked with my very dear friend Per Tingbrand co-editing surviving letters Solander wrote or received. These were located in repositories all over the world, including Australia, and published in 1995 by MUP in Melbourne and Scandinavian University Press in Oslo. Solander's earliest correspondence, preserved by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, dates from February 1753 and is written to the physician Johan Gustaf Hallman, apparently when he [Hallman] was still in Padua. It may seem like a contradiction in terms to state that one needs to know what a text is about before one can fully translate it, but this is so often the case. For weeks Per and I were unable to transcribe, let alone translate, one particular phrase in the letter. Over a two week period I looked at the two words with a magnifying glass over

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and over again without recognition. Then suddenly, as if a veil was lifted, I read the words *acarus subcutaneous* and immediately realized that here was a reference to the itch mite *Sarcoptes scabiei*, the cause of the skin disease scabies which I had often seen (and feared) in India.

A whole chunk of the letter suddenly made sense. Given the publication, albeit in 1777, of Solander's paper 'Furia infernalis', largely based on his studies of the 1750s, it is possible that his doctoral dissertation (had he completed one) would have dealt with the insect origins of skin diseases such as scabies. I should point out that until Solander was given an honorary doctorate by Oxford University in November 1771, his title 'Dr' Solander was even more honorific.

For virtually all of Solander's correspondence (in English, Swedish, Danish, Latin and German), I took on the task of deciphering the embedded names of authors, books and plant and animal species.



C. Linnaeus

Without knowing if a writer is referring to a person, a book, a plant or an animal it is often impossible for a translator to make sense of a text. Another letter of Solander that I found in the Uppsala University Library was written in Latin to the great Swiss polymath Albrecht von Haller in December 1760. I had only studied Latin for two years in high school, but even with the help of more experienced classical scholars (including Gough Whitlam's sister Freda) the letter stubbornly resisted clear translation. Aside from the fact that eighteenth-century letters are rarely in uncorrupted classical Latin, the introductory first page was missing and the remaining sheets were full of abbreviations, page numbers and a puzzling *mélange* of botanical and seemingly entomological terms like *insectifera*, *arachnoideas*, *muscas*, *araneas*, *scarabaeus*. It was only when I

consulted my facsimile of the first edition of Linnaeus's *Species plantarum* (1753), that the code was broken. Solander was discussing orchids whose specific epithets often allude to spidery and insect-like flowers. Some English coherence was now possible with square bracketed inclusions and footnotes.

Around the time that Solander wrote his letter of 1753 to Johan Gustaf Hallman, he assisted Linnaeus in cataloguing the royal collections at Ulriksdal and Drottningholm. In the summer of the same year he returned to Piteå and followed the Piteå River upstream, before crossing the mountains into Norway. Historians often work with unusual clues (aside from manuscripts and printed works) and it is from botanical specimens in the Natural History Museum in Stockholm, that we know that Solander reached Rørstad (as Linnaeus had done two decades before) on the North Atlantic coast. And in 1755 he also made a pioneering botanical expedition up the Torne River to Lake Torneträsk. Retracing these travels with my family in 1992 I realized that Solander could not have been the effete dilettante that some have painted him. Nor was he unfamiliar with the sea, for several times he must have sailed the length and breadth of the unpredictable Gulf of Bothnia during these years.

Although requests had been made of, by British naturalists such as Peter Collinson, and John Ellis, to send someone who could give instruction in Linnean methods, there is little doubt that Solander was despatched (with a stipend) so that he could provide useful information and plants to Sweden. In 1759 he travelled south to the province of Skåne with the intention of sailing from Helsingør in Denmark. Crossing the North Sea was fraught with the usual dangers of the sea, but this was also wartime. Unfortunately, he was forced to spend the winter with relatives after he contracted malaria. He did not reach England until July 1760. Ironically, the vessel he originally intended to sail on, sank with heavy loss of life.

As Linnaeus did a quarter of a century before, Solander went immediately to the

Swedish Church in London. When I followed his trail there, I was surprised by the frosty reception I received. It was only after I insisted that my interest was in eighteenth-century rather than nineteenth-century records, that the mood changed. The parish secretary was convinced that I was working on Jack the Ripper! I was stunned, until she explained that one of the Ripper's victims was a Swedish prostitute named Elizabeth 'Long Liz' Stride and that over the years she had been pestered by a succession of amateur sleuths.

Through John Ellis, Solander quickly met most of the leading naturalists and nurserymen in London, including James Lee, the Scottish-born gardener and author who introduced the *Fuchsia* to Europe. Solander soon became indispensable to these British naturalists seeking to put their collections into Linnean systematic order. When they learned that Linnaeus wanted Solander to leave Britain and take up the chair of botany in St Petersburg, they were aghast and quickly rallied to secure a position for him in the fledgling British Museum, then located in Montagu House and only 15 years old as an institution.

Solander continued to make important and influential friends in London, one of whom was Benjamin Franklin. My first hint of this was a letter the Quaker naturalist Peter Collinson wrote to Solander in October 1767. Unfortunately for a time the location and full text of this letter was a mystery, because in 1991, Per Tingbrand, my co-editor for Solander's correspondence, suffered a devastating cerebral haemorrhage which left him with impaired speech, epilepsy and memory loss. Per had noted the existence of Collinson's letter to Solander in a working calendar of correspondence, but he simply could not remember where it was held. Shortly before we were obliged to hand our manuscript to our publisher Melbourne University Press, he suddenly remembered that it was among Benjamin Franklin's papers in the American Philosophical Society's collection in Philadelphia.

Desperate to offer our readers a comprehensive collection of Solander's correspondence, I sent an urgent fax to Philadelphia explaining our project and our looming deadline, but was very disappointed to learn that the letter could not be found. Then the librarian remembered that there was a photostat, dating from the 1950s, in the Franklin Collection at Yale University Library. It is hard for me to describe the surreal pleasure and relief I felt on receiving that eighteenth-century letter from Yale the following morning: it is not often that one receives a fax from someone who has been dead for nearly 240 years telling you that Benjamin Franklin is coming for the weekend!

Throughout this period of pioneering taxonomy and museology, Solander led a double-life as a Swedish agent. Once again, there was an element of serendipity in discovering this fact. I was very curious how Britain could be at war with France and allied to Prussia, yet continue to buy iron ore from Sweden, which was at war with Prussia and allied to France. A study of the diplomatic canvas of the period led me to the *Calendar of Home Office Papers* during the Seven Years' War (published in 1878 and of which Flinders University has the only library copy in Australia) and then to the papers of the pioneering industrialist of the age of steam, Matthew Boulton, in Birmingham.

Espionage has long been an adjunct of normal academic, diplomatic and commercial activity—and I speak as a former intelligence officer myself. In Solander's case there is circumstantial evidence that he collected industrial and perhaps even military intelligence in Britain during two tours of southern England. He clearly took a special interest in glass making in Bristol, metal working in Woodstock and naval movements in Portsmouth. However, there is much firmer evidence that he assisted the Swedish industrialist and merchant Clas Alströmer and his brother Johan, in illegal attempts to recruit skilled British artisans to Swedish industry. On the orders of the Secretary of State, Solander was put

under surveillance and his mail was intercepted. Thus, in 1765 we know that he wrote at least four letters to Matthew Boulton, in an attempt to lure him to Sweden. One can only speculate on the course the Industrial Revolution might have taken had Boulton gone to Sweden rather than partnered James Watt!

Within a few years of becoming Assistant Keeper at the British Museum, Solander made England his permanent home. In refusing the chair of botany in St Petersburg, he offended Linnaeus who appears to have had plans for him to succeed him in Uppsala. Solander's brazen independence may also have cost him the hand in marriage of Linnaeus' daughter. After October 1762, we know of only one other letter Solander wrote to his old teacher. This was from Rio de Janeiro on board the *Endeavour* in 1768 and was full of anguish. There is no doubt that Linnaeus and Solander were estranged by this time, but I will say more of this later.

Solander's voyage around the world on the *Endeavour* came about through his friendship with Joseph Banks. It was Banks who met Solander's expenses. He showed himself admirably adaptable whether at sea or on land, but Banks had made sure that they were well prepared. As John Ellis recorded in an oft-quoted letter to Linnaeus:

No people ever went to sea better fitted out for the purpose of Natural History, nor more elegantly. They have got a fine library of Natural History; they have all sorts of machines for catching and preserving insects; all kinds of nets, trawls, drags and hooks for coral fishing; they have even a curious contrivance of a telescope, by which, put into the water, you can see the bottom to a great depth, where it is clear. They have many cases of bottles with ground stoppers, of several sizes, to preserve animals in spirits. They have the several sorts of salts to surround the seeds; and wax, both beeswax and that of the Myrica; besides there are many people whose sole business it is to attend them for this very purpose. They have two painters

and draughtsmen, several volunteers who have a tolerable notion of Natural History; in short Solander assured me this expedition would cost Mr Banks ten thousand pounds.

The *Endeavour* left England in late August 1768. If Solander kept a journal during the voyage it has not survived, but he did write letters from Madeira and Rio de Janeiro which give him a voice in recounting aspects of the expedition. Solander, for example, tells us of their warm reception in Madeira from expatriate English, local religious orders and the Portuguese governor and in sharp contrast he tells us of their ill-treatment by the Portuguese authorities in Brazil who refused to let the members of the expedition land except those directly engaged in the purchase of provisions. Solander also tells us of his clandestine visit ashore and their foraging for botanical specimens among the salad herbs and the fodder for the ship's animals. Both Banks' and Cook's journals are also rich in references to Solander and his adventures (and misadventures) during the expedition.

In Tierra del Fuego, for example, Solander



HM Barque Endeavour (replica)

nearly froze to death when he and Banks underestimated the terrain and the weather. Two of Banks' black servants did perish.

One of the principal reasons for the expedition was to observe the Transit of Venus and the *Endeavour* reached Tahiti in April 1769. Nothing was left to chance. To ensure untroubled observations a fort with fosses, earthworks and palisade was erected and manned by marines. Solander's rather earthy 'Tahitian vocabulary' and his 'Observationes de Tahiti' (preserved at the School of Oriental and African Studies, in London) offer numerous insights to his experiences on the island and also valuable ethno-botanical information. We also have some oral history of the voyage which Charles Blagden recorded from conversations with Solander, shortly before his death, which are today preserved in the Yale University Library.

From Tahiti, the *Endeavour* sailed for New Zealand which had not been visited by Europeans since Tasman's expedition. Landfall was made at Poverty Bay on the east coast on 8 October 1769.

After six months of running survey with landings at Anaura Bay, Tolaga Bay, the Bay of Plenty, Mercury Bay, the Bay of Islands and Queen Charlotte Sound in which both the North and South Islands were circumnavigated and Cook Strait was discovered, they departed for the east coast of New Holland on 31 March 1770 laden with hundreds of plant specimens. Solander's matching botanical manuscripts, such as his *Primitae florum Novae Zelandiae* – preserved in the British Museum (Natural History) – are also rich in detail and contain valuable evidence of the range of coastal habitats he explored, in addition to Maori plant names which he often recorded with amazing accuracy.

The *Endeavour* spent just six days in Botany Bay. Cook at first named it Stingray Bay, but rechristened it when he learned of the rich botanical harvest Banks and Solander had acquired. In the course of charting the east coast of Australia the *Endeavour* grounded and nearly sank on

the Great Barrier Reef and had to be careened for repairs at what is now the Endeavour River in North Queensland. Yet another rich botanical harvest was made and Solander would pen the first description of a Kangaroo – albeit, an unwitting composite of two species.

After confirming the existence of Torres Strait, the *Endeavour* sailed for the Dutch East Indies where malaria and dysentery killed many of the crew. Solander almost died too. He was still very weak by the time the *Endeavour* reached the Cape of Good Hope and suffered a relapse. Perhaps having had the disease in Sweden he had a degree of immunity which helped him survive.



Banks, as drawn by Benjamin West.

A large number of the zoological specimens from the *Endeavour* voyage were eventually lost. But we know that in the Pacific alone, Banks and Solander described 222 new

species of fish. Fortunately the botanical collection survived as a whole. In it were 110 previously unknown genera and 1300 new species—all described and provisionally named and classified. Banks had planned to publish over 700 botanical plates with Solander, to be called the *Florilegium*. Unfortunately Solander's sudden death, the recession induced by the American War of Independence and Banks' own increasingly diverse interests, eventually led to the cancellation of the project. Had the *Florilegium* been published in the eighteenth century it would certainly have secured their scientific reputations. Instead the world had to wait until the 1980s for Alecto Historical Editions to publish this work from the original copper plates.

Like Banks, Solander returned to Britain a celebrity. And like most celebrities he eventually encountered criticism and satire. Although he left a large number of manuscripts, his reputation suffered

because his work was not published and because of accusations of laziness. In 1992, I was shocked, when reading a copy of Hooker's edition of Banks' *Endeavour* journal in London, to see it besmirched with savage graffiti: 'Solander was a parasite—he lived on and with Banks practically all his life in England. What did he give the world? P. C.' The margins of such a book deserve better than to become a forum for necrological dispute, but I was glad to see that the feisty New Zealand-born scholar Averil Lysaght had responded in pencil: 'Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. The slanderer has not even signed his name!' Despite such unkind sentiments, there is little doubt that Solander was well liked. The novelist Fanny Burney, fondly deemed him a 'philosophical gossip', while James Boswell declared: 'Throw him where you will, he swims'.

Solander's travels did not end with the *Endeavour* voyage. When Joseph Banks broke with the Admiralty over the preparations for Cook's second great voyage, he instead took Solander and the team he had assembled, to the Inner Hebrides, Iceland and Orkney. (Banks' companions included other *Endeavour* veterans such as Lt John Gore, the boy Nicholas Young and Alexander Samarang, the Malay servant Banks engaged in Batavia.) Solander's linguistic and scientific skills, were of great use to Banks, particularly in Iceland, then a Danish Colony.

Aside from their botanical pursuits, in the Hebrides they climbed the scree-covered Paps of Jura visited Celtic monastic ruins and natural wonders such as Fingal's cave on Staffa. (In *Nature's Argonaut* I have speculated whether the artist Sydney Parkinson may have inspired this visit because aboard the *Endeavour* he had a copy of James MacPherson's purported translations of the epic works of Ossian including *Fingal*, published in 1762.) In Iceland they collected ancient manuscripts of the sagas, visited Thingvellir and the eponymous geo-thermal spouts at Geyser, before visiting the ancient bishopric of Skálholt and climbing volcanic Mt Hekla.

On Orkney they visited the ancient standing stones of Stenness and excavated a Neolithic burial mound at Skail.

On their return they visited Edinburgh where they met the philosopher David Hume and also Boswell and Johnson soon inspired to visit the Hebrides and the Western Isles of Scotland in their wake. Indeed one could say that Banks and Solander helped to initiate a tradition of romantic tourism in this part of the world. Indeed Fingal's cave would inspire Mendelssohn's 'Hebrides' Overture, one of J. M. W. Turner's atmospheric marine landscapes, poems by Scott, Wordsworth and Keats, and even a visit by Queen Victoria.

A decade after his return from Iceland, in May 1782, when he was only 49 years of age, Solander died as a result of a stroke and was buried in the Swedish Church in London, next to the philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg (whose grave was twice disturbed by grave-robbing phrenologists). In 1913, just before the original church was demolished, his remains were moved to Brookwood Cemetery, in Woking and re-interred with a modern granite headstone paid for by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences. Poor Swedenborg was sent back to Sweden for interment in Uppsala Cathedral (where Linnaeus also lies), but, alas, with the wrong head!



How then do we summarise Solander's scientific contribution? To begin with, he was the first taxonomist to describe and catalogue the natural history collection of the British Museum. He was an extraordinarily observant naturalist with a keen interest in morphology, recognizing both unique characteristics in species and generic affinities in far-flung corners of the globe. He catalogued Banks' collection. He assisted William Aiton with plant classifications for Kew Gardens. He catalogued the Duchess of Portland's enormous natural history collection. He

helped revise Alexander Russell's *Natural History of Aleppo*, and contributed to John Ellis' *Natural History of Zoophytes*. He assisted most of the leading British naturalists of his day, including John Fothergill, Peter Collinson, Thomas Pennant, John Lightfoot, John Bartram, and Alexander Garden. Although the *Florilegium* was abandoned and Solander's name is not now formally associated with most of the plants he collected, his specimens were studied and his detailed descriptions were used by many other naturalists such as Johan Christian Fabricius, Carl Linnaeus the younger, Johann Reinhold Forster, Robert Brown, J. D. Hooker, Berthold Seemann and George Bentham. Solander had a pioneering role in implanting the Linnean system in Britain and clearly had an important scientific influence on Banks: later advising him on domestic matters and encouraging his candidature for presidency of the Royal Society. For Banks, Solander's death was the end of the closest male friendship of his life. Of their three years together on the *Endeavour* he wrote:

"I can say of him that he combined an incomparable diligence and an acumen that left nothing unsettled, with an unbelievable equanimity. During all that time we did not once have any altercation which for a moment became heated. We often freely contested each other's opinions in all subjects, but always ended as we had begun, good-humouredly and generally being of the same opinion after one of us had accepted his opponent's reasons . . ."

But perhaps Solander's most profound influence was on James Cook. The Swedish naturalist was five years younger than the captain of the *Endeavour*, whereas Banks was fifteen years his junior. The opportunity for a largely self-educated and only recently commissioned officer to spend three years in close quarters with a man of Solander's learning was rare. He must surely have helped refine the Yorkshireman's sensibilities during mealtime conversations in the great cabin, between watches or in long hauls

ashore in the longboat, just as he enriched those of Banks - the future President of the Royal Society - destined to shape the landscape of British scientific endeavours and institutions as an organizer, facilitator and scientific entrepreneur. Not infrequently the journals of the expedition record Solander and Cook venturing forth together on specific missions and surveys during their landfalls. Cook no doubt learnt the value of recording descriptive detail from a masterly journalist such as Banks, but Solander probably also helped teach him the value of systematic observation and comparison - even if expressed in layman's analogies. Surely Solander also had a role in enlarging Cook's vocabulary and expanding his abstract linguistic horizons through protracted discourse. Three years of subtle intellectual osmosis imbued Cook with many of the values of the Enlightenment and helped transform a very capable mariner into the greatest of explorers.

Today, the Solander Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens in Sydney is named in fitting tribute to Solander's pioneering contribution to the botanical taxonomy of Australia. Apart from Cape Solander on the southern arm of Botany Bay, the Solander Islands of New Zealand and Olof Swartz's genus *Solandra* which honour the Swedish naturalist, at least seven plants bear the specific epithet *solandri* - as do two species of fish and Solander's petrel *Pterodroma solandri*. Many more know



Pterodroma solandri (Drawing M. Fukagawa)

Solander's name from the archival 'Solander box' he designed during his years at the British Museum.

Ten years after the publication of *Nature's*

Argonaut, I feel it is incumbent on me, to raise, once again, a question which I raised at the very end of my biography of Solander. Did Linnaeus really want Solander to marry his eldest daughter and could there be another explanation for the tragic breach between the master and his favourite pupil? If there is another explanation it may involve Solander's mother. Solander reportedly wrote no more than three letters to her during his first decade in England and none after his voyage on the *Endeavour*. In 1774 Magdalena Solander wrote with a heavy heart to Pehr Wilhelm Wargentin that she had 'no hope to expect a letter' from her son, but still believed he wanted to hear from her. Three years later she echoed these sentiments in yet another sad letter to Wargentin. Pointedly, it was asserted by Sir James Edward Smith founder of the Linnean Society of London, that after Solander's death several letters from his mother were found unopened, presumably among his effects. There is no corroboration for Smith's assertion, but could it be that Solander was somehow hurt or offended by his mother rather than simply dilatory as his absence from Sweden grew more and more permanent? Linnaeus declared of Solander that he had 'cherished him as a son' under his own roof. It will also be remembered that eight months before Solander's birth, Linnaeus visited Piteå and stayed with the Solander family.

As a consequence, there have been rumours that Solander was in fact Linnaeus' natural child, born a month before term. Carl Solander was fourteen years older than his young wife. A pious minister, he may have been more prone to meditations of the soul than of the flesh. And in his place, Linnaeus, an unmarried twenty-six-year-old already celebrating the dynamics of plant sexuality in his Lapland journal, may have kindled a brief passion which locked him into a lifelong secret with Magdalena.

Three decades later the prospect of Solander marrying Lisa Stina and the prospect of unwitting incest could have provoked a moral crisis in Linnaeus. If this

were true, it may also be possible that Solander was finally told of his kinship with Lisa Stina to explain the impossibility of their marriage. Could he then have recoiled in wounded anger and silence at the infidelity of his mother, the liberties of his teacher and the cruel twist of fate which denied him marriage to the woman he loved?

Such assertions have absolutely no corroboration, however much they might neatly explain biographical puzzles. Piteå in the early 1730s was a deeply conservative frontier town where it seems inconceivable that a pastor's wife would risk her husband's respect and her community position through adultery. In the decade since the publication of my biography of Solander I have frequently pondered this question and wondered whether DNA testing of the bones which lie in Uppsala Cathedral and in Brookwood Cemetery (if any still remain) can confirm or dismiss rumours of Solander's paternity. But with our modern freedoms and sensibilities we tend to forget the values, aspirations and pressures of the eighteenth century. Linnaeus was not born into the Swedish aristocracy, he was ennobled in his 50s. He wanted his son to marry into wealth and status.

Ultimately his son would not marry at all and his relationship with his father would remain deeply strained. Linnaeus seems to have had similar aspirations for his daughters. As Jane Austen might have put it, he wanted a Mr Bingley or a Mr Darcy for Lisa Stina, rather than a Dr Solander subsisting on a modest salary at the British Museum. This quest for wealth and status meant Lisa-Stina would marry Major Carl Frederik Bergencrantz in July 1764. He was eighteen years her senior and she had two children by him, but the marriage was not a success and she eventually returned to her family home. Sadly, she died less than a month before Solander, at the age of 39.

Whatever the exact circumstances, there can be no doubt that Linnaeus and Solander were estranged. Mutual friends attempted to keep an indirect channel of

communication open between the two by passing on polite deferential greetings, but the past could not be undone. Linnaeus would come to regret, bitterly, their estrangement—especially when the *Endeavour* returned with a vast botanical treasure chest of 110 new genera—a collection which by its very existence defined the deficiencies of his *Species Plantarum*.

Solander shared no details with his former teacher, but he was a poor correspondent even at the best of times. Perhaps Fabricius offered the most accurate assessment when he wrote to Banks: 'Dr Solander is an exceedingly good, friendly man, as long as one is with him, but there is certainly no body, who less remembers his friends, than he as soon as they are out of his eyes'. So perhaps this 'absent mindedness' more correctly explains his neglect of his mother, and perhaps even Linnaeus, rather than thwarted marriage or any dark secret regarding his paternity.

Be that as it may, I would like to give Sir Joseph Banks the final word this evening, not on the issue of Solander's paternity, but on the loss he felt at Solander's death and his assessment of his character. I should point out that the original English version of this letter has been lost and until Per Tingbrand and I published Solander's collected correspondence, it was only

known from a German translation of a Swedish translation. We were at least able to offer our English language readers a translation based directly on a Swedish text of 1785. In the final paragraph of his letter to Johan Aströmer, two and a half years after Solander's death, Banks declared:

"This too early loss of a friend, whom I during my more mature years have loved and whom I will always miss, makes me wish to draw a veil over his death, as soon as I have ceased to speak of it. I can never think of it without feeling a mortal pain, for which mankind shudders; but if decency, justice, moderation, benevolence, diligence; if natural as well as acquired ability lays claim to a place in a better world, then nothing other than a lack of equal merit on my part can prevent us from meeting again"

**Dr Edward
Duyker**

Thank you



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