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## The Linnaean Tercentenary - Jenny Edmonds, School of Biology, University of Leeds

The year 2007 will commemorate the tercentenary of the birth of Linnaeus. The Linnean Society of London, founded in 1788, purchased the collections of Carl Linnaeus from the widow of its first President, James Edward Smith who had purchased them from Linnaeus' widow in 1784. These collections are now housed in the Society's rooms in Burlington House, Piccadilly. The Society is currently planning various activities to celebrate 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Linnaeus' birth; these include:

- ◆ **Digitisation of the Society's Major Collections;** this will include all the Linnaean collections (including the butterflies, moths, beetles, fish, shells and plants), the Linnaean letters, the Linnean Library catalogue, the Smith Herbarium and the completed Linnaean Plant Name Typification Project. These will then be available on our website and freely available to both the public and the scientific community.
- ◆ **Scientific Meetings** covering a variety of topics relevant to the importance of Linnaeus' work in the past, present and future. These will involve an international conference hopefully at the Natural History Museum, London and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, as well as smaller meetings, involving various other biological learned societies in the Burlington House rooms. In addition, we hope to hold an Evening Discourse and a series of lectures suitable for various age groups in association with the Royal Institution in London and a joint meeting with the Royal Society.
- ◆ **Excursions:** the possibility of an Anglo-Swedish excursion retracing part of Linnaeus' journey through Gotland, is currently being investigated, together with a second excursion touring the Linnaean Landscapes in Sweden organised by the Friends of Hammarby.
- ◆ **Exhibitions with selected museums, botanic gardens and zoos** being invited to mount exhibitions to mark the tercentenary as appropriate to their particular biological collections and visitors. These will cover the major regions of the British Isles, as well as Australia and the United States, and will all be linked through our Society website. British institutions who have so far agreed to participate in this venture include Cambridge University Herbarium, Botanic Garden and Museum of Zoology; Chester Zoo; Edinburgh Botanic Garden; Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; the London Zoo; Manchester Museum; National Botanic Garden of Wales; the National Museums Liverpool; the NHM Linnaeus Link Project; Oxford University Herbaria, Museum of Natural History and Botanic Garden; the RHS Lindley Library and Ulster Museum. In Australia, the Western Australian herbarium at Perth, and the Sydney Botanic Garden will both be participating, as hopefully will Missouri Botanical Garden, the New York Botanic Garden, Chicago Botanic Garden and the Smithsonian Institution (Museum of Natural History) in the US.
- ◆ **Promotional features** will include distributing a computer-generated laminated poster of the more important aspects of the Society's collections to regional museums and universities; investigating the possibility of media programmes; an educational virtual tour of some of the more important and informative collections held by the Linnean Society; a Linnaean Garden at the Chelsea Flower Show and possibly also at Tatton Park; and related events at the RBG, Kew, during 2007.
- ◆ **Memorabilia** such as commemorative stamps, a Wedgwood Medallion of Linnaeus, a Linnaean medal, limited edition botanical and zoological prints, commemorative china, and popular and scientific publications are all being considered.
- ◆ **Social events** envisaged include a commemorative dinner at a suitable biological venue in London, a summer reception and/or picnic, and receptions at both the Linnean Society and the Swedish Residence to which British and Swedish royalty and various Swedish Embassy staff will be invited.

We are in contact with the Linnean Societies of Bordeaux, Lyons, Provence, New York, New South Wales and Sweden, the Swedish Embassy and the Swedish community in the UK to ensure that we are able to share the celebrations of this momentous event.

**NB.** If any Natural History Institution not mentioned above would like to mount a display or exhibition in 2007, please let me know. We propose to provide a laminated poster as a 'nucleus' for any such display around which relevant material held by the different institutions can be focused. In addition any comments or offers of help on any of the proposals listed above would be greatly welcomed.