

Brief Biography

DANIEL SOLANDER

(1733 - 1782)

Ted Nye, Otago Scandinavian Society

Daniel Solander was born at Piteå in the north of Sweden into a family with a tradition in the Lutheran priesthood and the law.

At the age of 17 Solander went to study law at Uppsala University but he rapidly turned his interests towards natural history and studied under Carl Linnaeus. Linnaeus was by then gaining an international reputation by reason of his innovative views on classification which, some years later, influenced Darwin.

Solander went to London at the age of 25, where he was in demand to introduce the English botanists to the Linnaean system of classification. Solander worked at the British Museum and soon came to the notice of Sir Joseph Banks. Banks in turn was to be one of the scientific party to travel with Captain Cook to the Pacific in 1769. Banks and Solander clearly got on well on this voyage, and an enthusiastic partnership began which led to the discovery of hundreds of new plant species in Tahiti, New Zealand and Australia.

Solander was thus the first professional botanist to collect and describe New Zealand plant species, either on his own, or in collaboration with Banks. Cheeseman (1925) lists about 35 New Zealand species so described. In addition, some other authors honoured Solander by giving plants the epithet '*solandri*', as in *Astelia solandri*.

