Who was Carl Linnaeus?

Carl Linnaeus

Carl Linnaeus was a Swedish botanist, physician and zoologist. He is often called the father of modern taxonomy, as he developed the scheme of binomial nomenclature. As a child, Linnaeus was fascinated by botany. He enjoyed spending time in the garden with his father and learning the names of the plants and flowers which grew there.

He went on to study medicine and botany at Uppsala University. It was during his time there that Linnaeus began to create his own classification system for plants. Linnaeus undertook numerous scientific expeditions through Scandinavia during his career, collecting specimens and further refining his ideas on classification. He also expanded his system to include animals and minerals.

Linnaeus published over 25 books, including his most famous works on classification; *Species Plantarum* and *Systema Naturae*. During his life Linnaeus amassed a vast collection of books, manuscripts and specimens. At the time of his death, Linnaeus was one of the most acclaimed scientists in Europe.

Carl Linnaeus: FAST FACTS

Name: Carl Nilsson Linnaeus

Born: 23 May 1707, Råshult, Sweden

Died: 10 January 1778, Hammarby estate, Uppsala, Sweden. Buried in Uppsala Cathedral.

Education: Lower Grammer School Växjö , Växjö Gymnasium, Lund University 1727, Uppsala University 1728, University of Harderwijk 1735

Married: Sara Elisabeth Moræa in 1739

Children: Carl, Elisabeth Christina, Sara Magdalena, Lovisa, Sara Christina, Johannes and Sophia

Jobs: Botany lecturer at Uppsala University, Professor of Medicine at Uppsala University, Rector of Uppsala University

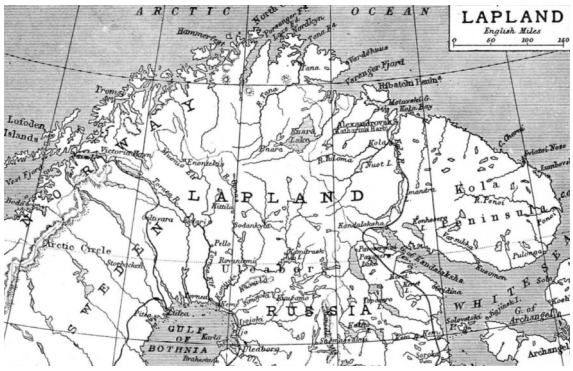
Clubs: Royal Swedish Academy of Science
Berlin Academy of Sciences

Honours: Ennobled in 1761, taking the name Carl von Linné
Chief Physician of King Adolf Frederick
Order of the Polar Star

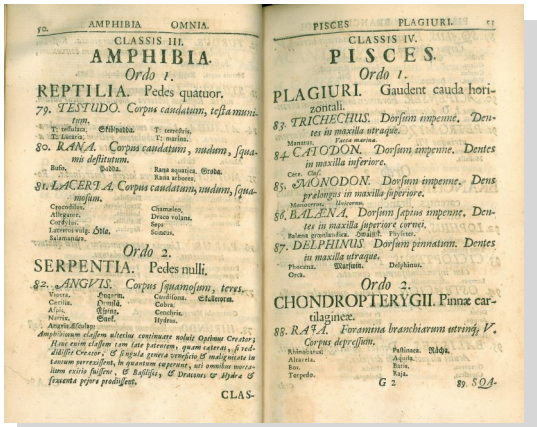
Expeditions

During his time working at Uppsala University, Linnaeus undertook **5** expeditions across Scandinavia. His first journey was to Lapland, where he hoped to find new plants, animals and possibly mineral deposits. He was also interested in the native Sami people.

Later expeditions took in Dalarna in central Sweden, the islands of Ölan and Gotland, and the provinces of Västergötland and Scania. Many of Linnaeus' travels were commissioned by the Swedish government of the time.



The area visited by Linnaeus on his first expedition


AMPHIBIA OMNIA. 51

CLASSIS III.

AMPHIBIA.

Ordo 1.

REPTILIA. Pedes quatuor.

79. TESTUDO. Corpus caudatum, testa munitum.

80. RANA. Corpus caudatum, nudum, squamis destitutum.

81. LACERTA. Corpus caudatum, nudum, squamosum.

Ordo 2.

SERPENTIA. Pedes nulli.

82. ANGUIS. Corpus squamosum, teres,

PISCES PLAGIURI. 61

CLASSIS IV.

PISCES.

Ordo 1.

PLAGIURI. Gaudent cauda horizontali.

83. TRICHECHUS. Dorsum impenne. Dentes in maxilla utraque.

84. CATODON. Dorsum impenne. Dentes in maxilla inferiore.

85. MONODON. Dorsum impenne. Dens prolongus in maxilla superiore.

86. BALAENA. Dorsum setipos impenne. Dentes in maxilla superiore cornei.

87. DELPHINUS. Dorsum pinnatum. Dentes in maxilla utraque.

Ordo 2.

CHONDROPTERYGII. Pinnæ cartilagineæ.

88. RAIA. Foramina branchiarum utrinq; V.

G 2 89. SQUA-

CLAS-

A page from *Systema Naturae*

Binomial Classification

Linnaeus is most famous for revolutionising the way we name biological specimens. In his book *Systema Naturae* he introduced his new system of taxonomy, and gave organisms two-part names, one for the genus and another for species. Although some names have later been changed, this is the system we still use today - for example, humans are *Homo sapiens*.

Another book *Species Plantarum* was published in 1753 and is internationally recognised as the starting point of modern botanical nomenclature.

The Apostles

During Linnaeus' time at Uppsala University he had many devoted students. **17** of these he called 'apostles' - they made many botanical expeditions around the world, often with his help. Two of the apostles journeyed with James Cook on *HMS Endeavour* and *HMS Resolution*.

The journeys were often dangerous, and **7** of the apostles never made it home to Sweden. Many of those who did gave a selection of specimens to Linnaeus upon their return.

The apostles inspired Joseph Banks who began the tradition for all British research ships to have a naturalist on board.

HMS Resolution

Papilio menelaus from the Linnean collection

The Specimen Collections

At the time of his death, Linnaeus' collection was considered among the finest in Sweden. Linnaeus' son inherited his collections, and after his death they were sold to the English botanist James Edward Smith. Smith brought the collections to London in 1784 and founded the Linnean Society of London in 1788.

The collection currently contains **14,300** herbarium specimens and **3,200** insect specimens. Many of these specimens are 'type' specimens - usually the first member of the species to be scientifically described.

The Linnean Society of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BF UK
www.linnean.org T: +44 (0)20 7434 4479 F: +44 (0)20 7287 9364
Charity Reference No. 220509

The LINNEAN SOCIETY of London