

The Linnean Society

19 January 1988



The Linnean Society of London, the world's oldest learned body devoted to biology and natural history, celebrates the 200th anniversary of its foundation in 1788. To mark this four stamps are being issued on 19 January featuring plants and animals from some of the Society's collections. The stamps were designed by Edward Hughes.

Carl Linné, later ennobled as Carl von Linné, is better known by his Latin name of Carolus Linnaeus. Born in 1707 in Reashult in the Småland province of Sweden, he studied medicine at Lund and Uppsala universities, gaining his doctorate in the Netherlands. His interests turned to natural history and he went on several plant-hunting expeditions, perhaps the most celebrated of which was to Lapland when still a young man. He invented the international system for naming living things which is still used today, as well as the system of classifying them in groups of species, genera, families and so on, and Linnaeus himself named thousands of living things. This system was first published in his *Systema Naturae*, first drafted in 1735.

The primary impulse for the establishment of the Linnean Society of London came in 1788,

headquarters in Burlington House, Piccadilly, together with a magnificent collection of biological books and journals, manuscripts, letters and illustrations given or bequeathed by naturalists and fellows over the last 200 years.



Portrait of Linnaeus (1707–1778)

Some of these form the basis of the designs of the stamps.

The illustrations on the stamps are all from the Society's collections. On the 18p stamp is the short-spined sea scorpion, or bull-rout, *Myoxocephalus scorpius*. This a northern fish that



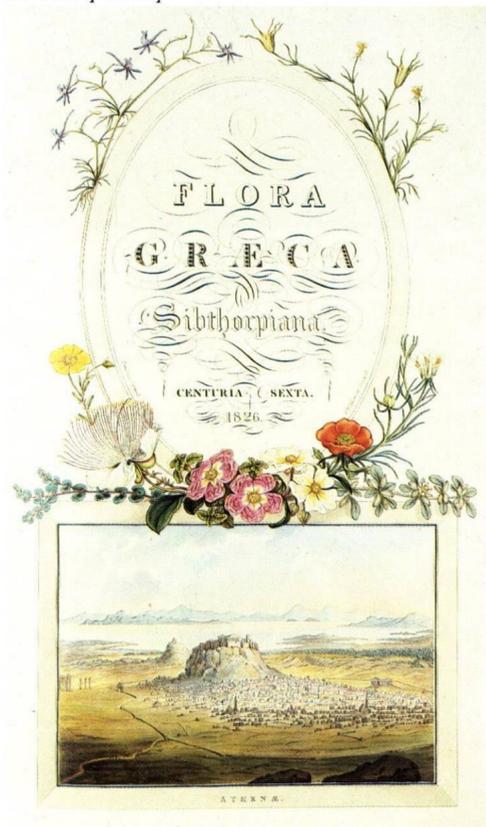
some ten years after Linnaeus' death, with the purchase of his collections of plants, animals, books and manuscripts by Sir James Edward Smith. The Society was granted its first Royal charter in 1802 and purchased the Linnaeus collections from their owner in 1828. These are now permanently housed in the Society's



occurs only rarely in British waters. The illustration and manuscript remarks upon which it is superimposed are by Jonathan Couch FLS, (1789–1870) who spent most of his life as a doctor at Polperro in Cornwall.

Chosen for the **26p** value is the yellow water-lily, *Nuphar lutea*, found in lakes, ponds and streams throughout the British Isles. The illustration is by a descendant of the portraitist Sir Joshua Reynolds, Major Joshua Swatkin FLS (1855–1939), who latterly lived in Wiltshire. The text is from an annotation by Sir Thomas Frankland in the margin of a copy of *Flora Angelica* by William Hudson.

Bewick's Swan, *Cygnus columbianus*, is shown on the **31p** value. It exists in two varieties: *C. columbianus* proper from North America and its counterpart *C. columbianus bewickii* from Europe and Asia. The illustration is by Edward Lear FLS (1812–88), famous for his nonsense rhymes and drawings for children. By profession, Lear was a painter and illustrator of *Title page of Flora Graeca edited by J E Smith, in the Society library*



distinction and also a keen naturalist. Accompanying Lear's swan is a note by William Yarrell who first recognised that Bewick's Swan was a distinct species from the Whooper Swan.

For the **34p** value the morel *Morchella esculenta* was chosen. This fungus, which is



widespread in Britain, is edible and often used in cooking. Unlike most fungi it is usually found in spring. The illustration is by the celebrated botanical artist James Sowerby (1757–1822) and the letter was written by one B McForster in 1821 to Sir James Edward Smith, founder president of the Linnean Society.

Technical Details

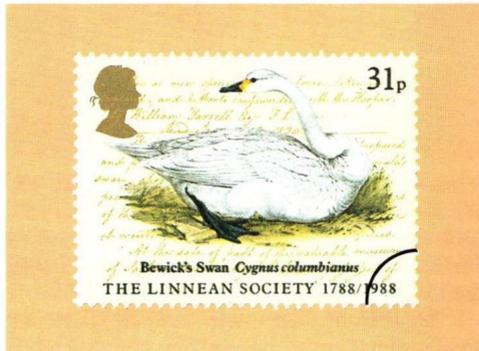
Designed by Edward Hughes, the stamps have been printed in photogravure by Harrison and Sons Limited. In format they are horizontal, 41 x 30mm, perf. 15 x 14, printed on unwatermarked, phosphor-coated paper. Printing is in sheets of 100 on PVA Dextrin gum.

PHQ Cards

PHQ cards (Nos 107 A–D) featuring each of the four stamps will be available from 5 January, 1988, price 15p each.

Presentation Pack

The presentation pack will cost £1.31 and was





Taraxacum officinale

"Coltsfoot" from *Flora Londonensis* 1777, in the Society library

designed by Edward Hughes, with text by Patrick Roper and photography by Andrew Cockrill. It was printed by Clement & Foster Limited.

First Day Cover

The first day cover shows some of the natural history books as on the flap of the presentation pack and was also designed by Edward Hughes. It costs 16p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service, one from the British Philatelic Bureau featuring *Linnaea*

borealis the logo of the Society, and the other from Burlington House London W1 featuring the monogram "L".

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the four stamps cancelled with either postmark. The charges will be £1.56 (inland) and £1.36 (overseas). Application forms, available from the Bureau and at Head Post Offices, should be returned not later than 19 January.

Customers requiring only the special pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped addressed envelope under an outer cover endorsed 'Special First Day of Issue Handstamp' to:

'British Philatelic Bureau' 20 Brandon Street,
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

'London W1' Special Postmark Duty
Western London Letter District Office
35-50 Rathbone Place
LONDON W1P 1AA





swamp
at L
and
Neth
plant
posit
count
plant
clubs
was
Brita
story
and
gore
It w
hard
180
tom
tem



October by T.P. Year, London 1773, with marginal illustrations by Sylvanus Edwards.

manuscript material, water-colour drawings, and book annotations by Richard Droy, F.L.S.

the Society in 1858 that Darwin and Wallace's theory of evolution by natural selection was first promulgated.

tion is by EDWARD DEAR (1888), famous for his nonsense rhymes and drawings for children but by profession a painter and illustrator of great distinction and also a keen naturalist. Accompanying it is a note by William Yarrell, also a Fellow of the Linnæan Society, who first recognised that Bewick's Swan was a distinct species from the Whooper Swan.

used today, as well as the system of classifying them in groups of species, genera, families and so on in ever wider circles of generality. The Linnæan system of naming broadly entrains each species having two scientific names, the first the generic and the second the specific. The yellow water-lily on one of the stamps, for instance, is called *Naphar lutea*, but there is also a smaller British species, the least yellow water-lily, which is called *Naphar pumila*. Same genus, different species. Linnaeus himself named thousands of living things. The plant to which



The morel, *Marcella esculenta*, is a fungus that is widespread in Britain, though seldom common. As its specific name implies, it is edible and often used in cookery. Unlike most fungi it is usually found in spring. The illustration is by the celebrated botanical artist James Sowerby (1757-1822) and the letter was written by one B McForster in 1821 to Sir James Edward Smith, founder president of the Linnæan Society. Debate continues still over the definition and naming of the morel, a variable plant with many close relatives. This clearly shows how the work begun by Linnaeus and continued by the Linnæan Society that bears his name is carried on with undiminished vigour.



NATURAL HISTORY
The Linnæan Society
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER



Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorbier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB