



Embassy of Sweden

DANIEL SOLANDER

The Solander Monument - How it all began

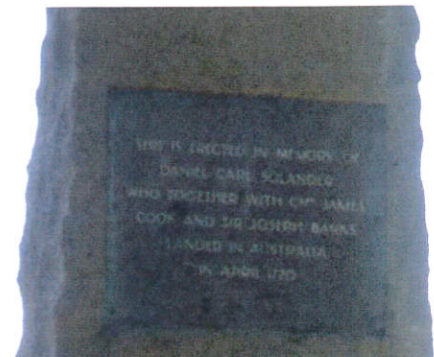
In a previous Swedelink article I mentioned Sweden's first Consul General in 1906-10, Count Carl Birger Mörner. He took the initiative to a Solander Fund, with the purpose to erect a monument in honour of the Swedish naturalist Daniel Solander. The Swedish community gave widespread support and Mörner asked Granitaktiebolaget C. A. Kullgrens Enka, a well-known Swedish exporter of Swedish granite, to cut a block of granite, free of cost. Kullgrens Enka was founded in 1842 in Uddevalla and lasted until 1978. Mörner further agreed with Rederiaktiebolaget Transatlantic to deliver the granite to Sydney, free of cost. Transatlantic established the first regular shipping line between Sweden and Australia in 1907. The company was founded in Gothenburg in 1904 and lasted until 1994.



The second Consul General of Sweden in Sydney, Sigurd Theodor von Goes, who was also the first President of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce, continued the preparations for a Solander monument. The final crucial arrangements were made by William Kopsen, who had been an important sponsor of the project since it was initiated. Mr Kopsen, born in Vaxholm, Sweden in



1847 emigrated to Sydney in 1868. He left for Fiji in 1870, where he later established Kopsen & Co, to import textiles and general merchandise. He was well established in Fiji as a member of several boards. He was appointed Consul for Sweden and Norway in 1881. Kopsen sent articles about local customs, flora and fauna to a Stockholm newspaper and became a member of the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. In 1889 he returned to Sydney, setting up his company Kopsen & Co at [70 Clarence Street](#). He became Senior Vice-President of the Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Australasia and the South Sea Islands when it was founded in 1911 and was the Honorary Vice Consul of Sweden in 1923-28.





Kopsen agreed on the site for the Solander monument with the Trustees of Kurnell Park. The block of granite arrived in Sydney in April 1914, from where it was taken on a small steamer to Kurnell Pier. At the invitation of Kopsen a great number of Swedish volunteers assembled at Kurnell on a fine Saturday morning in May 1914. The 2 ton block of granite was transported on rollers on the pier, it took two hours, and then further to the exact location of the monument. Kopsen surprised the volunteers with a Swedish luncheon, including aquavit, Swedish punsch and champagne. It was described: *"There were many speeches and toasts before the more serious part of the work was attacked, but such were our high spirits and redoubled efforts that already, after three hours, the granite stone was duly at its final destination. The Union Jack, the Australian ensign, and our own blue-yellow flag were hoisted aloft on flower-decorated masts, and patriotic songs were sung. An elaborate banquet had been arranged by our generous host in the great pavilion, which is situated a stone's throw from the Solander monument, and here we had more champagne, more speeches and more songs."* Later a large square piece of Australian trachyte was placed in position to form a base for the block of Swedish granite. As the Great War broke out, the actual unveiling ceremony of the monument took a more modest form.

A century later, on 11 October 2015, I had the great honor and privilege to attend the re-inauguration of the Solander monument in Kurnell. It was initiated and organised by Jan Anger and included speeches, music

and Swedish folk dance. A day to remember, with a large turnout by the Swedish community including the Swedish School in Sydney. The Solander monument in Kurnell is of significant importance. It would be appropriate for the Swedish Australian Chamber of Commerce, the Swedish Honorary General Consulate and obviously the Embassy to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the first visit by a Swede to this beautiful continent.

Pär Ahlberger
Ambassador for Sweden



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