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Neurological stamp

Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772)

Swedenborg, best known for his mystic and religious beliefs, also made important contributions to science. He received his formal education in Uppsala, where his father (Jesper Svedberg) was Professor of Theology. Soon after Swedenborg's death, his devoted followers created Swedenborgian societies dedicated to the study of his work.

He produced a new design for a dry dock, machinery for working salt springs and a system for moving large boats overland. He devised a method of calculating longitude at sea by the stars, invented an ear trumpet, began the science of crystallography, drew up plans for a machine gun, a submarine and an aeroplane. As assessor for the Royal Bureau of Mines he also devoted himself to the improvement of the Swedish metal mining industry.

His concepts of representation of the cerebral cortex were astonishingly modern. He observed that the muscles of the extremities were controlled by the upper frontal convolutions, those of the abdomen and thorax by the middle frontal convolutions, and those of the head and neck by the lower frontal convolutions. Swedenborg also studied the cerebrospinal fluid, the pituitary gland (which he called the arch gland) and proposed the concept of upper and lower motor neuron. He constructed a type of neuron theory based on the observations of Malpighi and Leeuwenhoek.

Swedenborg died on 29 March 1772 in London and was buried there in the Swedish Lutheran church. In 1908 the Swedish Government brought his remains back to Sweden, and they now lie in a large tomb in the



Cathedral at Uppsala, not far from that of Linnaeus. He was initially reburied with the wrong skull which had, until then, remained in England. In 1936 Swedenborg was honoured with this stamp to mark the 250th anniversary of his birth (Stanley Gibbons 201, 202; Scott 266, 267).

L F HAAS