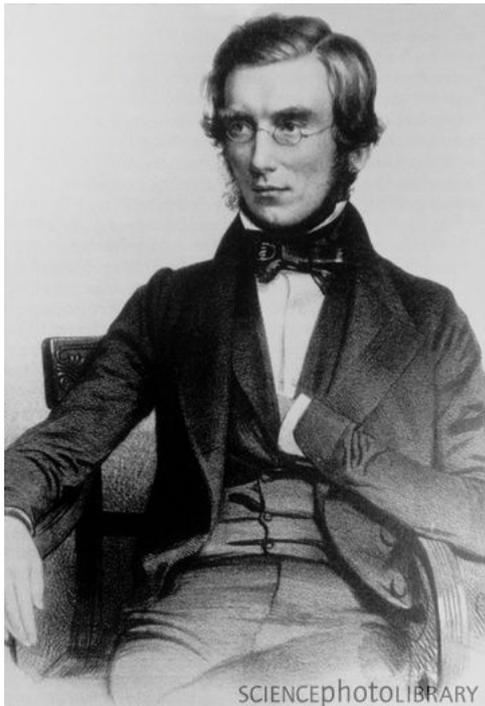


## Sir Joseph Hooker and the Ross Antarctic Expedition



Sir Joseph Hooker, in many ways the forgotten man in the story of Evolution, was a great scientist, plant collector and explorer. He wrote the Floras of the Antarctic, New Zealand, India and Tasmania with a major introduction to the Flora of Australia. This talk will mainly focus on his participation as Assistant Surgeon and Botanist on board *Erebus*, one of two ships on the Ross Antarctic Expedition.

The speaker, Dr Peter Donaldson, has for the past three years been making a major documentary on the life and travels of this great Victorian scientist. Filming has been completed in the Himalayas, the subantarctic Auckland and Campbell islands; Morocco, the UK, New Zealand and Australia.

The talk will chart the gradual development of Hooker's ideas of Southern Hemisphere plants having evolved from an ancient Antarctic landmass. This was many years before the discovery of continental drift and Gondwanaland.

As well as discussing plants such as the relationships between the southern beech trees, Peter will show photos of beautiful subantarctic megaherbs. He will also discuss his 350 km on foot retracing of Hooker's 1848 travels to the Tibetan border behind Mount Kangchenjunga, the world's third highest mountain. This involved the first filming of some extremely remote areas, and contributed to Charles Darwin's thinking on Evolution.

Peter will also show some of Hooker's original sketches and type specimens from the Herbarium of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and Hooker's first sketch of Mount Everest which Peter located during his research in the archives at Kew.

Lastly, Peter will discuss what type of man Hooker was, his contribution to the Theory of Evolution and his continuing influence on the science of plant distributions particularly in the Southern Hemisphere. The talk may include some short sequences from his forthcoming documentary.

### About the speaker

Dr Peter Donaldson is a producer, director, co-writer and presenter with experience of expedition filmmaking in Nepal, Antarctica, New Zealand and



Indonesia. He has a strong science background and runs his own technology-based company.

Peter attended the Ballarat School of Mines before completing a PhD in X-ray Crystallography at the University of Alberta. During that time he climbed many peaks in the Canadian Rockies.

Following his PhD he worked with his brother Roger – Director and Producer of “World’s Fastest Indian” – on two climbing films with Sir Edmund Hillary in New Zealand and Nepal before a postdoctoral fellowship in London. He then returned to Australia as a research fellow at the Australian National University. During that period he participated in the voyage of the 18m yacht Solo, at that time the smallest vessel to visit mainland Antarctica , and along with Ted Rayment from the ABC made the one hour documentary “Voyage to the Ice”.

Peter then joined the major research organization CSIRO and worked in Indonesia for three years documenting Indonesian agriculture. During that time he directed “Duck Farming - an Indonesian Tradition” (winner of an award at the Berlin Agricultural Film Festival). The film illustrated the ingenuity of duck farmers in widely different regions of Indonesia through low input farming appropriate to their surroundings.



Peter became Assistant to the CEO of CSIRO before leaving to establish ActionLaser, a high tech laser drilling company. In time he established his own company, Filtration Solutions, designing and consulting in the mining and pulp and paper industries.

Peter has had a long-standing interest in the

personalities and issues surrounding the Theory of Evolution as well as climbing and trekking in remote regions. For the past three years he has been making a television documentary retracing the travels of Sir Joseph Hooker, the forgotten man in the Theory of Evolution.

This has involved a 350 km trek on foot in Eastern Nepal, and associated filming in Sikkim, the Antarctic, Morocco, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. His research for this documentary has unearthed the first western sketch of Mount Everest. Peter is a speaker and his photos and excerpts from the documentary will form part of the Hooker centenary symposium and exhibition at Kew this December.