

## PROFESSOR HALL OF OXFORD: AN INTERVIEW WITH *THE TIMES*

On Wednesday April 15 *The Times* published a half-page article by Pearson Phillips "Science and the Shroud", principally based on an interview with Professor Edward ("Teddy") Hall, Director of the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art. Last September Professor Hall attended the special Conference on Shroud radiocarbon-dating, and his laboratory, founded in 1954, is one of only two in this country likely to receive samples of the Shroud for radiocarbon-dating purposes.

Professor Hall makes clear that even when he eventually receives samples he will not know which are from the Shroud, as various 'control' samples will also be supplied. [see also Letters, p.10]. A self-avowed agnostic, the Shroud assignment nonetheless intrigues him: "If it was simply an obvious forgery, no scientist would give it the time of day." As he went on to comment to Pearson Phillips: "My view of Christ as an historical individual is that he was obviously a powerful personality. I suppose it is possible that, in some way we do not currently fully understand, some kind of impression from him was transferred to the Shroud. But if we produce a carbon date around the start of the first century AD, the fat will really be in the fire. As a scientist, I would then find it difficult to dismiss the Shroud's authenticity."