

The Society's Future

The death of our Chairman Rodney Hoare, the recent health problems suffered by General Secretary/Treasurer Dr. Michael Clift, and your Editor's residency in Australia make imperative some reappraisal of the Society's future. In fact this has been needed for some considerable time, not least because the Shroud world has changed very radically during this latter phase of the Society's twenty year history.

When the Society began in 1977 the Shroud debate had just been transformed from obscurity to one of world-wide interest, and there was no shortage of well-respected individuals from a variety of professional fields enthusiastic to contribute their expertise and to further Shroud research. The Society's natural role was therefore to provide a platform for such views, with regular public lectures the natural means for this, and London still a reasonably congenial venue for getting together. At that time the Newsletter was a comparatively minor part of the Society's activities; indeed it did not even come into existence as a formal publication until 1982.

Twenty years on the radiocarbon dating has pushed the Shroud back into the shadows, the number of potential speakers with real expertise has dwindled to a trickle, added to which travel into central London has become so perennially fraught with difficulties (which it is only to be hoped the change of government will eventually remedy), that attendance of lectures has often been poor. Michael Clift, upon whom the mantle fell for organising such lecture meetings, has very understandably made clear that this latter is now one responsibility too many for him, and temporarily at least the simple remedy seems to be for the Society to relinquish this side of its activities except in the event of some major new finding.

This Newsletter will now, therefore, assume even more of the Society's central focus than it has become in recent years. It will continue to be published twice yearly, continuing also with the increased paging introduced a year or so ago, and both the printing and mailing of all non-European copies will temporarily at least be done from here in Australia, with just the European copies (printed and envelope-packed in Australia), bulk-mailed from the UK.

Dr. Michael Clift will continue to handle all subscriptions, but both to ease the burden on him and as a long-term simplification of all administration, subscriptions will in future become payable on a two-yearly, rather than an annual basis, with the subscription cost adjusted pro rata. The good news is that all members who have already paid their subscription for 1997 will receive a free subscription for 1998. This again eases the burden upon Michael Clift, and has been only possible due to the healthy state of the Society's funds thanks to his sound stewardship. The balance sheet for 26 October 1995 to 12 May 1997 is shown below:

INCOME	AMOUNT
Halifax 25.10.95	2138.48
Subs and fees	3274.25
Door collection	13.00
Accidental debit repaid	14.00
Interest gross 1.2.96	13.87
Interest gross 1.8.96	34.74
TOTAL	5488.34

EXPENDITURE	AMOUNT
Room Hire	90.00
Phone/Fax	240.00
Postage	437.89
Stationery	75.04
NL 42 print and post	391.89
NL 41 and 42 p. copying tel.fax, postage IW	84.50
Entertaining guest sp.	66.55
Photocopying	40.82
Tax on interest 2 lots	10.42
Entertaining guest speaker	38.00
Printing NL 43	165.20
Expenses A. Mills	70.00
NL 43 Expenses IW	39.83
NL 44 Expenses IW	23.00
Ink Cartridge	21.73
Expenses Armitage	5.00
Printing NL 44	196.02
Book purchase, Boag	22.00

In memoriam	30.00
Accidental debit	14.00
TOTAL	2061.89

Final Balance: Halifax Building Society 12.5.97 £3426.45

You will therefore not be asked for the next subscription (for 1999 and 2000) before the Nov/Dec 1998 issue of this Newsletter. An extra free year will also be added to the account of those members who have been foresightful enough to pay in advance into the next millenium. Those members who have not yet paid their 1997 membership fee are urged to send this to Michael as soon as possible, otherwise they will no longer be eligible for the free membership year. On this occasion reminders to those concerned have been included as inserts with their Newsletters.

Constitutionally all these represent interim measures in the wake of Chairman Rodney Hoare's death, and pending formal approval and/or alternative arrangements. Consultations with members of the Steering Committee will be held during the next few months, and any further developments announced in the next Newsletter.