

## OBITUARIES

### **Baroness Ryder of Warsaw,**

CMG, OBE,

**President and Patron of the British Society  
for the Turin Shroud,  
1992-2000**



Almost simultaneous with the publication of the last issue of this Newsletter came news of the death of Baroness Ryder of Warsaw. The then Lady Ryder succeeded her husband Lord Cheshire as the Society's honorary president and patron of the BSTS shortly following his death in 1992, though the pressures of her charity work made her role with the society rarely more than a passive one. A devout Roman Catholic, in 1953, as Sue Ryder, and using her mother's Suffolk house as headquarters, she established the Sue Ryder Foundation for the sick of all ages. The grew into more than 80 homes worldwide, funded by the income from 500 charity shops.

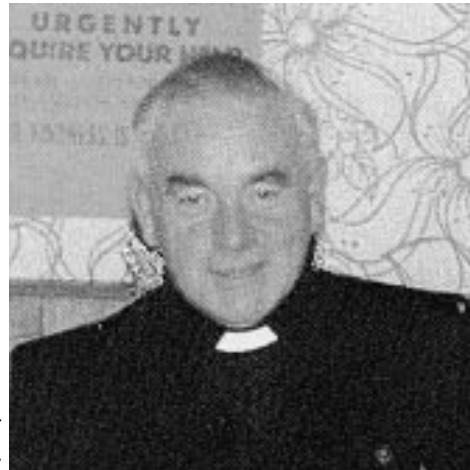
Sue Ryder's charity work was particularly strong in Poland. Her bond with this country was forged during World War II, when she worked for the Polish section of the Special Operations Executive (SOE), the unit responsible for co-ordinating resistance to Hitler in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany. In the wake of the War, and right up to the fall of the Iron Curtain, she personally drove heavy lorries from England to Poland loaded with donated medical and food supplies.

In 1959 Sue Ryder married World War II hero the then Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, VC, who had founded the Cheshire Homes in the wake of his wartime experiences (which included witnessing the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki. Though it was a true marriage, which produced a son and a daughter, the pair maintained the separateness of their charity organisations, as well as their personal independence controlling these. It was during convalescence following illness shortly after the War that Leonard Cheshire first became aware of, and convinced by, the Turin Shroud. In the 1950s he campaigned with a London bus converted into a travelling Shroud exhibition in order to make the Shroud more widely known. His Mission for the Relief of Suffering disseminated Shroud photos until its work in this field became superseded by the foundation of the BSTS in 1977. It was therefore natural for him to become the BSTS honorary President and for his wife to succeed him in this role on his death.

Baroness Ryder died on November 2, 2000, at the West Suffolk Hospital. It is understood that in the last few weeks of her life she became heartbroken at the profligacy of trustees who had assumed charge of the Foundation bearing her name. She therefore tried to form a new charity, the Bouverie Foundation.

## **The Reverend Francis O'Leary**

**Founder of Jospice  
International, who  
introduced to the world  
the closest known  
parallel to the  
Turin Shroud**



The Turin Shroud draws to it some remarkable individuals, and few have come more remarkable than Fr. Francis O'Leary. It was in 1987, while my wife and I were living in Almondsbury, Bristol, that he first telephoned me out-of-the-blue, asking me if I could travel the next day to Lancashire to look at something that he thought I might find interesting. I amazed myself by agreeing - learning in the process something of what happened to Galilean fishermen when Jesus said to them 'Follow me' - and the next day duly found myself confronting the so-called Jospice Mattress, the extraordinary mattress cover which one of Fr. O'Leary's hospice nurses found imprinted with the image of a then just deceased patient called Les. This imprint remains to this day the closest known parallel to the phenomenon that is the Turin Shroud.

During this same visit and other later ones, Fr. O'Leary took me on the rounds of his hospice, my first ever encounter with a hospital of this kind. I expected it to be a depressing experience and was duly astounded to find it the very reverse. While it was inevitably harrowing to be introduced to so many people close to death it was also impossible not to be infected by the laughter and happiness that Fr. O'Leary generated amongst his patients - whose life expectancy following admission averaged a mere ten to eleven days.

Fr. O'Leary's work with the dying began while he was a young Mill Hill missionary in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. In 1962 he came across a woman known as Mrs Jacob lying close to death in a Rawalpindi street. Having no hospital at that time, he lodged her in a mud hut in his church's grounds. The group of people who looked after her took St Joseph as their patron, and soon set up the St Joseph's Hospice Association, later to be known as Jospice. From this modest beginning the first Jospice hospice for the poor was opened at Rawalpindi in 1964, soon to be followed by others around the world, in Colombia in 1969, in Peru in 1970, followed by Ecuador, Honduras, Guatemala, and India. As recently as 1997 a hospice was opened in Mexico City.

At an early stage, Fr. O'Leary sought the advice of Mother Teresa of Calcutta, whose work had inspired him. She told him not to worry about money, but to put his trust in God. He took this to heart, no more so than in 1972 on a visit home to England, when he came across a mansion with large gardens at Thornton, Lancashire, not far from his birthplace, Crosby, and decided to make it his first hospice in England. When the mansion failed to meet its reserve at auction he obtained a bank loan on the basis of unsecured cash loans solicited from private individuals, and somehow always managed to keep the venture properly funded from subsequent donations. He was a hard man to refuse. Later the Thornton hospice became the headquarters for Jospice, and it was here that the now famous mattress imprint phenomenon occurred in March 1981. The previous year Fr. O'Leary had founded another hospice at nearby Ormskirk.

In 1973 Fr. O'Leary was the subject of the TV programme *This is Your Life*, and in 1996 he was awarded an MBE. Every evening he would celebrate Mass in the hospice, those too sick to attend always being enabled to follow proceedings via close-circuit TV, after which he would work long into

the night. At Christmas, with the help of staff and patients, he would stage a live crib on the hospice lawn, regardless of the weather, sometimes using animals 'borrowed' from the fields of nearby farms.

Fr. O'Leary's innumerable eccentricities not infrequently incurred the wrath of his ecclesiastical superiors, and he affected no airs of piety. He enjoyed his 'ciggies', beer, music, laughter, some large pet dogs (the beauties of nature and animals he regarded as of great importance for his patients' well-being), and the local football. He died, entirely as he would have wished, at his own beloved Thornton hospice. He taught me that the saints among us don't necessarily advertise their presence with neatly polished haloes...

## Recent Publications

All reviews are by the Editor unless otherwise stated

**Michael Hesemann** *Die Stummen Zeugen von Golgotha: Die faszinierende Geschichte der Passionsreliquien Christi [Golgotha's Silent Witnesses: The Fascinating History of the Relics of Christ's Passion]*, Munich, 2000, 272 pages, profusely illustrated with photographs and line drawings throughout the text. ISBN 3-7205-2139-7.

A 1950s nominally Church of England education instilled in me the belief - soon to be sorely tested - that all claimed relics of Christ's passion were to be regarded with the deepest distrust and suspicion. According to the prevailing cynicism there were enough pieces of the 'True Cross' to build the Italian navy. There was definitely a curious multiplicity of 'Holy Coats'. And I recall much sniggering at tales of the 'Holy Foreskin', rumoured to have snapped when its elasticity was casually tested during some ill-documented private examination.

Frustratingly, my still very inadequate grasp of German precludes me from gaining a full appreciation of Michael Hesemann's book. Nevertheless, abundantly clear is that it is far and away the most balanced, authoritative, exhaustively researched and entertaining work on the Passion relics that has been written in well over a century. To the best of my awareness the last book that even approached such thoroughness was Ch. Rohault de Fleury's *Memoire sur les Instruments de la Passion de Notre Seigneur Jesus Christ*, a work which I occasionally consulted in the then Reader's Room at the British Museum more than thirty years ago. And that was published in Paris back in 1870.

Hesemann's first chapter is devoted to the Holy Cross, and actually includes a chart, based on Rohault de Fleury data, itemising by gross volume all the known purported pieces of the Cross exceeding 1000 cubic millimetres. From this we learn that the chunk possessed by Mount Athos is bigger than that preserved in Rome, also that Isleworth, East Bergholt, York and Swindon are among the English places that hold (or once held) reputed cross fragments. The total volume of all known pieces is an astonishing 3,946,416 cubic millimetres. This same chapter also includes discussion of the *S. Croce titulus* featured earlier in this Newsletter.

In a chapter on the Holy Nails as used to crucify Jesus, any scepticism towards relics is scarcely improved. Traditional crucifixes indicate the use of just three nails, while the most there can have been is four. Yet there are more than 30 European locations which claim one or more of the nails. It is a similar case with the Crown of Thorns. While the main contender for the original is preserved in the Sainte Chapelle, Paris, Rohault de Fleury's information as at 1870 was that no less than 193 thorns were scattered around Europe. In the case of the Holy Lance of John 19:34, one contender is in Vienna, while another is in St. Peter's.

Hesemann also has chapters on the site of Golgotha; the column of the scourging (preserved in the Basilica of S. Prassede, Rome); the Holy Coat of Trier; the Tunic of Argenteuil; the Veronica (22 highly authoritative pages amongst which we find the first ever published photo), the Oviedo Cloth,

the Empty Tomb, and what he dubs the 'Mother of all Relics', our Turin Shroud, to which he devotes 30 pages. In this latter every significant argument is touched on, including Garza Valdes's '*Bakterienkulturen*' and Whanger and Danin's plant images.

Throughout the book the information is detailed, up-to-date and accompanied by excellent photographs, many of which, to my certain knowledge will have demanded exhaustive research. The main thrust is that while from statistical logic there have to be quite a lot of fakes in circulation, amongst these there are items with a serious claim to authenticity. And while others, as in the case of the Veronica, are not necessarily what pious tradition has asserted them to be, even so they are worthy of serious historical interest.

Michael Hesemann studied History and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Göttingen.. He speaks excellent English and will be one of the speakers at the Dallas conference in October. The publication of his *Die Stummen Zeugen* in English - and soon - is an absolute must.

**Antonio Lombatti** *Sfida alla Sindone Una ricerca ai confini della storia [Challenge of the Shroud: Research into the Bounds of its History]*, Pontremoli (Italy) Centro Editore, 2000, 276 pages. Several black & white photos included with text, retail price 23000 Italian lire, 11.87 Euro.

In 1997 Antonio Lombatti founded the excellently-produced international scientific journal *Approfondimento Sindone*. This carries articles in the fields of history and science, both against as well as for the Shroud's authenticity.

*Sfida alla Sindone*, although of full book length, and very well presented, comprises just three chapters. The first of these is scientific, with clearly well-informed discussion of the arguments and experiments of Walter McCrone, Nicholas Allen and Emily Craig. There follows a chapter on the Mandylion of Edessa and the relics of the Passion. Then the third chapter is called 'Evangelists and Templars' which after discussion of the gospel texts on Jesus' burial and his death on the cross (in that order), takes a chronological leap to the Middle Ages, where there is then in-depth discussion on the Knights Templars and the de Charnys. From Lombatti's numerous references to original texts it is evident that he is very erudite and he has researched exhaustively. It is difficult, however, to follow the complexities of his argument without spending a great deal more time grappling with the Italian than I have been able to up to the present time. A more thorough review may follow.

**Mark Antonacci** *The Resurrection of the Shroud: New Scientific, Medical and Archeological Evidence*, New York, M.Evans & Co Inc., 2000, 321 pages, with numerous black & white photos and diagrams scattered throughout the text

**Reviewed by**  
**Dr.Michael Clift**

This is an important new book on the Shroud; indeed, something of a *tour de force*. Following the radiocarbon dating result of 1988 there has been a cluster of new ideas and new hypotheses on the formation of the Shroud's image. Mark Antonacci has painstakingly examined all the serious contenders, and some of the less serious, in minute detail. It is a matter of some wonder that whereas his own expertise is in the legal profession he seems to be completely at home in general science and medicine. He is particularly good in his fair but final *coup de grace* to the hitherto vexing Dr. Walter McCrone. Carbon dating will never be the same again.

The text is good. Some of the ground, especially in the field of art, has been already amply covered in Ian Wilson's *The Blood and the Shroud*, but the two viewpoints are subtly and interestingly different.

It is a great pity that the print is so small. I had to use a magnifying glass throughout, and found it an

irritating distraction. Though it is difficult to know what can be done about this, I do have a suggestion for any 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Since many of the pictures have already appeared in other books, these could be omitted. In the case of others, many are of poor quality, as if produced by the cheaper kind of digital camera - though the diagrams are crisp and clear. So I suggest the performing of a substantial cull of photographs. This could usefully free up space to enable printing in a larger type-size in any future paperback edition.

**Mark Guscini** *The Burial Cloths of Christ* London, Catholic Truth Society (CTS), 2000, pocket-size paperback. 80 pp. with black & white photos scattered throughout, £1.95

The two burial-cloths referred to in the title of this superbly-produced little booklet are the Turin Shroud and the Oviedo sudarium, on both of which Mark Guscini writes with considerable authority, clarity and sound common-sense. The joy of the CTS type of publication is that it is a very handy size (4 x 6 inch), inexpensive yet far from excessively abbreviated. And here this is combined with a writer who finds just the right middle ground between the academic and the overly popular.

I particularly liked Mark's appreciative remarks, early on in the book, concerning the ebullient but fair-minded Professor Harry Gove, developer of the accelerator mass spectrometry carbon dating method used to date the Shroud. These are in significant contrast to the rather more intemperate ones by Gove's fellow-American, Mark Antonacci, in his recent book, reviewed by Dr. Clift above. I also enjoyed Mark Guscini's discussion of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Pray Manuscript in relation to the Shroud as preserved in Turin: '

If the artist of Codex Pray did not see the Shroud now kept in Turin, he must have seen something with a large number of the particular characteristics of the Shroud. To suggest that all this is coincidence would be like suggesting, for example that the Roman poet Virgil had never heard of Homer and the Iliad or the Odyssey - any similarities can just be put down to chance.'

This is the sort of clear-minded argument that we need to see much more of from Shroud authors. The one pity of Mark's book - and one totally beyond his control - is that it is impossible with such a small format to do justice to photographs, either of the Shroud or the Oviedo cloth. To be weighed against this, however, is the fact that so handy and inexpensive a format must make the subject available and accessible to a much wider audience than would otherwise be the case. Overall, most warmly recommended.

Mark is, of course, also well-known for his earlier book *The Oviedo Cloth* published in 1998. Less well known is that he has recently had published, in Spanish, a very fine biography of the British general Sir John Moore, *Moore 1761-1809*. Sir John Moore was a British lieutenant general who during the Napoleonic War led a very heroic midwinter retreat of his troops from Madrid to La Coruna, where in January 1809 his stand against Napoleon's French was victorious, though he himself was mortally wounded in the process.

## Letters to the Editor

### Thorns for Protection?

From Shirley Wade of Colchester, UK

Do you think it possible that the nasty prickly *Gundelia* plants might have been put there to give the body some protection from small animals such as rodents? After all, just wrapping it once in a sheet of linen and leaving it lying on a stone shelf does seem rather hazardous: particularly if they had been given reason to think that the spirit might come back and want to use it again. This might also explain why the women rushed back to the tomb at the first possible moment after the Sabbath: to check that the body was O.K.

When on p.46 of *The Turin Shroud: The Illustrated Evidence* I first read your reference to a 'mistake' in relation to the differential lengths of the top and bottom parts of the cloth I agreed with you that that was what it must have been. However a little later it suddenly came to me that it felt right as it was. If the objective was to keep the life-blood with the body surely it would be natural to position the body so that the linen could come up and over it at both ends.

I am so very sorry that you and Barrie had such a devastating shock and disappointment over the colour printing of the book. I must admit that I thought the colour of your skin looked very odd, and was rather relieved when I came to page 65 to see normal flesh tones in the top picture!

I was particularly interested in the Magazine article including information about the idea that repairs may have skewed the carbon dating results, because when I first looked at page 8 of your book the photograph of one of the pieces of linen used in the process gave me the impression that the threads on the left were very slightly thicker than those on the right. I gazed at it for some time and eventually concluded that it must be a trick of the light, but I now wonder.

## **Pennsylvania Gem**

From Paul Maloney of Quakertown, Pennsylvania

Just a small correction to your review of Fossati's *La Sacra Sindone, Storia documentata di una secolare venerazione*. There is indeed a University of Philadelphia--or rather more correctly Philadelphia University (the former Philadelphia College of Textiles and Science). But that is not where the Sommerville gem [seen above] is kept. Rather, it is at the University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology of the University of Pennsylvania. Should anyone care to examine it this is where they would go. Many years ago I studied this gem and wrote to Don Fossati about it. It is really quite small--about the size of a signet seal typical for a "large" setting in a ring. It was Fossati himself who explained to me that what appear to be "staves" in the background of the three clerics are actually church torches used for lighting during the ostensions. Unfortunately, we do not have a modern photograph showing the details adequately. It would require a numismatist's photographic system to obtain a quality picture or a botanist's/geologist's microscope with a mounted camera to get such details.

P.S. A little note about the Elvis Presley piece in the last Newsletter - maybe you could include it in the next. The following is a quotation from Peter Guralnick's monumental biography of Elvis (Vol II, *Careless Love*, 1999):

"Larry (Geller) had told Elvis he would have some new books for him on the tour, and he was not surprised to be awakened by a call from Al Strada requesting that he bring the books over to the house so Elvis could take a look at them right away. Larry took care to place Frank O. Adam's *Scientific search for the Face of Jesus*, an inquiry into the mystery of the Shroud of Turin, at the top of the pile. It was a subject he and Elvis had spoken of often, and he was sure Elvis would get a great deal out of the book". Elvis went into the bathroom to read (we can suppose it was this book), and later died.

## **The Shroud in 'Phrase and Fable'...**

From Claire Evans of East Fremantle, West Australia

I thought you might be interested to know that under the heading 'Turin, Shroud of' in the latest edition of *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, one is told to look under 'Fakes'! The entry reads:

The shroud of twill linen kept in Turin Cathedral and claimed to be the one in which the body of Christ was wrapped after the crucifixion. The Pope agreed to radiocarbon dating in 1987, and in

1988 the archbishop of Turin appointed the Oxford Research Laboratory for Archaeology, the Department of Physics of Arizona University and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology at Zurich to date the shroud, pieces of which were given to these institutes in April 1988. The results were announced on 13 October and the cloth was dated between 1260 and 1390. There is no firm historical evidence that it was known before the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Although not accepted by all, the general conclusion is that the shroud is a medieval fake.

## **Forthcoming Events**

### **Paris Shroud Conference for April 2002.**

Fancy April in Paris? Following hotly on the heels of the Dallas Conference the French Shroud organization CIELT - Centre International d'Etudes sur le Linceul de Turin - which arranged highly successful international conferences in Paris in 1989, Rome in 1993 and Nice in 1997, has announced that it is to hold its 4th International Scientific Symposium in Paris between 25th & 26th April 2002. Project Director Maxence Hecquard and Council Vice-president Marcel Alponso have invited all those wanting to present papers to submit their abstracts before October 31 of this year. Notifications of acceptance will be sent out by the end of January.

The Symposium has two objectives:

1. to improve knowledge of the history of the Shroud before the 15th century,
2. to draw a conclusion on the new findings in the scientific domain, particularly concerning the forming of the image and the stains. Papers can be delivered in French or English, and there will be simultaneous translation into the other language. Abstracts should be between a half-page and a page in length. Full papers should be no more than 20 minutes reading time in length, with a further five minutes allowed for question. Discussion papers should not exceed 7 minutes. CIELT request that the final texts of presentations - which should not exceed 8 typewritten pages - should be sent in before the start of the Symposium, otherwise they reserve the right to refuse presentation or publication. Contributors should also try to accompany their text with a summary in the other language.

All enquiries and correspondence relating to this Conference should be submitted to:

CIELT Secretariat du Symposium de Paris,  
50 avenue des Ternes  
75017 Paris, France.  
Tel/Voicemail/Fax: (33/0) 1 45 48 67 15