

BSTS MEETING

The first meeting of the Society for several years took place in Beaconsfield in Bucks on October 21st. Thomas De Wesselow, author of The Sign, was the main speaker, with contributions from Antony Luby and Pam Moon. Antony uses the Shroud to get his children interested in religion by way of their own personal investigation. Pam Moon promotes interest in the Shroud through her mobile exhibition and talks. Chemist, Denis Mannix, was due to deliver his thinking on the Maillard reaction but illness prevented him making the journey and he was much missed. A summary of his thoughts can be found on the BSTS page of www.shroud-enigma.com. Thomas De Wesselow's talk on the supposition that - following the C14 test - the Shroud must be a medieval painting can also be found in full and on video on the same page. It is very interesting to have the perspective of an expert on the subject.

Ian Wilson kindly sent an introduction for both the meeting and Dr De Wesselow and, not least for the nostalgic value, BSTS members who could not be present might like to see below what he had to say.

David Rolfe

From Ian Wilson

It intrigues me to wonder how many of you here were attendees of the BSTS central London meetings back in the 1980s and early 1990s? If you were, my warm greetings from Australia, my personal congratulations - and do please stand up and present yourselves to this present gathering, assuming that you still can! Now for those of you who were not at those now historic meetings I should explain that as BSTS Chairman back at that time I usually prefaced the occasion's lecture with a brief 'state of the nation' summary of how I saw the then current state of Shroud studies. So I will do the same for this gathering in Beaconsfield today.

Back in late April this year David Rolfe, Mark Guscin and I attended the first ever International Congress of the Centro Español de Sindonología, the Spanish equivalent of the BSTS, held, in the beautiful city of Valencia, Spain . I can say without hesitation or exaggeration (and I'm sure David Rolfe will both endorse and expand on this), that both organisation and content-wise the Congress was not only the best presentation of ongoing historical and scientific research on the Shroud that there has been for a very long time, it was also the most promising. As but one example on the scientific front (and I could cite several), it was an absolute delight to see at last a most attractive young botanist from the University of the Balearic Islands, Marzia Boi, present a long overdue and positive reappraisal of the pioneering pollen researches of Dr Max Frei, researches that were terminated by Frei's untimely death in 1983 and have been neglected ever since by the Americans who purchased Frei's research materials. Marzia Boi's paper on this subject is already on Barrie Schwortz's website, it cries out for more scientific attention than it has yet received, but at last there's progress on the pollen front.

On the history front you will see from elsewhere in this Newsletter that while Judith and I were in Paris this April, where I lectured to the BSTS's French equivalent MNTV (Montre-Nous Ton Visage), I learned of the discovery, just two years ago of a mould for making a badge for pilgrims visiting the showings of the Shroud in Lirey, northern France, back in the time of Geoffroi de Charny. The fascinating aspect of the tiny souvenir badge that would have been made from this mould is that it exhibits certain significant differences from the only other known Lirey pilgrim badge, the well-known one in the Musée de Cluny Paris, that I have often reproduced in my books. These differences have important ramifications for other findings on Geoffroi de Charny, manuscript ones yet to be revealed, that form part of an ongoing wide-ranging international research project that I have set myself for my current 'retirement' years. Called 'Project Charny', the aim of this project is to try to determine beyond reasonable doubt how, when, where and from whom Geoffroi de Charny of Lirey came into possession of the cloth we today know as the Shroud of Turin. The questions may seem simple, but finding the answers to them is a vital component for countering the so grossly inaccurate date given to the Shroud given by the radiocarbon dating carried out back in 1988.

But there are also, not unrelated, exciting things currently happening on the art history front, and for me it has again been an absolute delight to see - from present-day Britain - someone as youthful and as professionally qualified in this field as Dr Thomas de Wesselow coming onto the scene barefacedly prepared to tell the world that the Shroud only makes sense to him, not as any fourteenth century forgery, but as a cloth imprinted two thousand years with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. As was evident from all the fuss that the media made back at the time his book *The Sign* was published, Dr de Wesselow has certain theological views which are not exactly mainstream for any practising Christian. But the founding mission statement of the BSTS, as this was first formulated by myself, by Bishop of Woolwich Dr John Robinson and others, back in 1976, was that the BSTS has no party line - that 'all those with a genuine interest in the Shroud of Turin are welcomed ... whatever their religion or beliefs.' I personally believe that Dr Tom de Wesselow has a most important role to play in the future of the Shroud research being conducted internationally, and that no better choice of speaker could have been made for this so brave new programme of British Society for the Turin Shroud lectures that David Rolfe and Reg- gie Norton are launching here today.

Ian Wilson,
Buderim, Australia
20 October 2012