

Editor's Notes –If the Shroud is authentic then it must have a 2000-year-old history. The world's general perception is that the C14 test made any search for such a history a “fool's errand”. This view is compounded by the vagaries and controversies of its first appearance in France in the custody of the Charny family which, of themselves, do little to challenge the C14. That said, the conclusion proclaimed by the C14 scientists that the Shroud can only be a crude medieval forgery “*...painted up and flogged off*” by some enterprising forger has clearly **not** stood the test of time. The “independent” invigilator of the C14 test, then Head of Research at the British Museum, Professor Michael Tite, now emeritus professor at Oxford University, has gone on record as agreeing that it cannot be a painting. He concludes that it probably did wrap a body that suffered a crucifixion and did - by some unknown means - leave the unique image we are all familiar with. But, of course, to conform with his dating, this must have occurred in the Middle Ages. Mmm...Has the media at large decided to shine a spotlight on Tite's damascene conversion? Of course not. In our secular age there would be a danger that the Shroud would return to its status as an “inconvenient truth¹”.



I am grateful to all our contributors for choosing the BSTS to present their papers. All are meticulously researched and argued. One, in particular, from César Barta and his collaborators, is “iconoclastic” in every sense. This journal is not formally peer reviewed. As editor, I can take soundings where I can but, for the most part, I must rely on my own fallible judgement on what is worthy of publication. This issue contains potentially revelatory new material in every paper. It all needs the closest scrutiny from those most able to provide it. To that end, I have created the facility for comment on all elements of this publication online and I hope that those able to do so will apply their knowledge to enable us all to benefit from a greater understanding and to ask the further questions required to carry our subject forward.

Thankfully, historians have not been intimidated by C14 into abandoning the quest for an ancient history for the Shroud. In the last issue Mario

¹ Google “Professor Michael Tite video” to hear his conversion for yourself.

Latandresse presented a case for the Shroud coming into the possession of the Charny family as the Mandylion via the Sainte-Chapelle. In this issue, Ian Wilson, the historian whose first book on the subject “resurrected” the Shroud for modern times, returns to the subject. In his “semi-retirement” and over a period of 10 years, he has discovered new contemporary documents that have led to new insights that go a long way to explain the “*vagaries and controversies*” that cloud the Charny story. It makes the raw material for an epic and very human historical novel in its own right. Fascinating stuff! It has also led Wilson onto the discovery of a potential new route the Shroud may have taken to France.

Ian presented his findings first at a lecture organised by BSTS in Bristol. The event provided the opportunity to meet numismatist, Justin Robinson, who provides this edition with, arguably, compelling “forensic” evidence for the Shroud’s pedigree way before the C14 date. In its heyday the BSTS was able to hold such meetings and events on a regular basis but today these are few and far between.



Ian Wilson answering questions at the BSTS Bristol presentation.

Fortunately, I can give you news of three other events in 2019 that you should try attend if you can. Pam Moon has organised two of them and both are in our great seats of learning, Cambridge and Oxford. Her impressive exhibition including a full-size replica will be at both.

The Cambridge event will run from February 28th until 20th March in the hall of Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs, Hills Road, Cambridge, CB2 1JR. On Thursday 8th March at 7:30 there will be a talk by Professor Peter Wadhams, Head of the Polar Ocean Physics Group in the Department of Applied Mathematics, University of Cambridge. He also serves on the Shroud Science Council in Turin. His talk is entitled: *The Science of the Shroud*. I will give a talk entitled, somewhat hubristically, *The Shroud of Turin – Its History and Future*. This will be on March 18th also at 7:30.

The Ahmadiyya Islamic community will be holding its annual Jalsa Salana the weekend of August 2-4. BSTS members are welcome to attend for the various lectures from some of the world's leading Shroud scholars. To obtain accreditation, email Arif Khan. The Ahmadiyya are most welcoming hosts. (arif.khan@reviewofreligions.org).

Please try and attend these events in some way or another. Hopefully, they will bear the kind of fruit that emerged in Bristol. I would like to be able to announce that for those that cannot attend the BSTS can make recordings available. Unfortunately, our resources, as they are, do not permit me to guarantee it. The sad fact is that the BSTS is in a weakened financial state. Natural attrition of a membership that had its highpoint forty years ago and the weight of C14 has taken its toll. But are we downhearted?

We are a dozen or so years away from the 2000th anniversary of the crucifixion which, to the genuinely open-minded, remains the most likely event to have created the Shroud and its image. It would be heartening to think we had the resources to mount a campaign up to the task of marking this auspicious moment. To this end, I would like to see if there is enough interest from our current membership to create a committee for that purpose. Fundraising and event coordination and promotion would be its main aim. The pen is mightier than the sword, but the words need to get out there. Without funds we remain dangerously ineffective. In Benedict Lawrence we have an excellent treasurer and he administers what little we have extremely well. However, he could do with some help.

Our membership is spread far and wide but with the internet that need not be a barrier. Yes, we are the *British Society*, but our subscribers are truly international. If anyone reading this can be persuaded to be co-opted, we need to reform the BSTS committee. Wherever and whoever you are, please email or write to me if you are interested in a more involved membership role. Anyone with formal committee experience will be particularly welcome as one goal would be to achieve charitable status. I am delighted to report that long-standing contributor, Hugh Duncan, has already stepped forward to join myself, Benedict, Pam Moon and our circulation managers, Brenda and Stuart Benton.

In the meantime, the website will carry the facility to receive donations if anyone is able and minded so to do. With a digital subscription only £10 perhaps you may know others who might be interested to take one up.

Many thanks to the Norwegian Shroud Society (see below <http://torinokledet.no>) for their invitation to me and my wife, Paula, for a series of Shroud talks from Oslo to Bergen in September. They were most generous hosts. As you can see, for this picture, we decided to adopt the body language of Hall, Tite and Hedges on the steps of the British Museum when they announced their Shroud C14 verdict.



L-R: Edward Hall, Michael Tite, Robert Hedges, Jostein Andreasson, Oddvar Søvik, Erik Jensen, David Rolfe.

The talks themselves were revealing in many ways. Apparently, a generic science text book common in all Norwegian schools cites the Shroud as a very good example of science being used to good effect to detect frauds. In colleges, where attendance at my talk was voluntary, hardly any young people turned up. Where it was mandatory, they came and stayed for as many questions as they could think of and the talks overran.



Above, my talk to a residential music school in Bergen. Below, Christ the King 6th form college in Lewisham where Marie Carver-Hughes (right) presented me with one of my largest and most sceptical audiences of the year. I am pleased to say that question time also overran.



Robert Rucker has sent details of an upcoming Shroud Conference in August this year in Ontario, Canada. See <http://custance.org/conference> for details. His own research papers can be found at:
<http://www.shroudresearch.net/research.html>

Now, on with the 88th edition of the Newsletter. There is much to get your teeth into and your head around.

David Rolfe, January 2019.