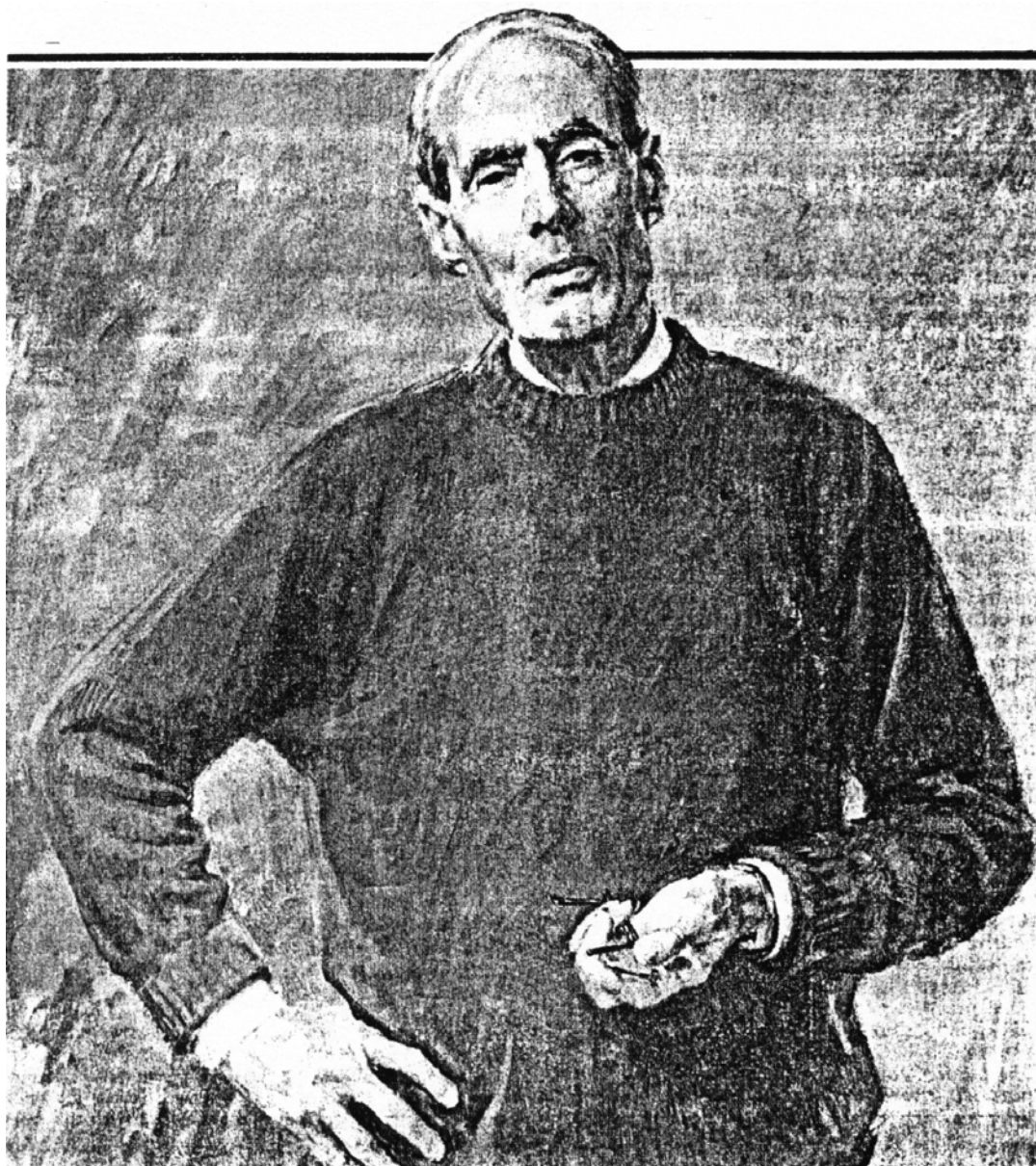


SHROUD NEWS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN  
edited by REX MORGAN, Author of several books on the Shroud  
Issue Number 72 AUGUST 1992



GROUP CAPTAIN LORD CHESHIRE, VC, OM, DSO\*\*, DFC, Shroud advocate  
who died 31st July 1992 (Pic from *Catholic Weekly*)

## EDITORIAL

This issue honours one of the Shroud's greatest advocates, Leonard Cheshire, who died at the end of July. As I am to speak at a Battle of Britain commemoration dinner in September I have been thinking back, inevitably, over those years of World War II which involved Cheshire as a leader in the air. Many of us, just too young to be in the war on active service, remember the Battle of Britain very vividly. As schoolchildren going to school each day with our gasmasks slung over our shoulders and our utility clothing and undernourishing victuals: the bully beef and the Argentine sausages, the whale steak and the horsemeat, and the powdered egg; living under the privations of war and rationing in a country torn and shattered by the enemy aerial bombardment, we had some inkling of what the gallant flyers like Group Captain Leonard Cheshire were doing. Every night for years those of us living under the flight paths between Britain and Germany listened from our beds or, more often, from under them as the squadrons of young pilots, boys who had been at school with us weeks before, went off in their fighter planes to Germany; listened as the air raid sirens sounded and the Luftwaffe flew low over our roofs into Britain to become the first warriors in human history to attack and destroy non combatant civilians; listened as their remaining Messerschmitts and Dorniers limped back across the channel; listened as our men returned, often with their planes on fire, engines spluttering intermittently and bits shot off their wings and fuselage; looked on in awe and horrified silence as we were paraded around the coffins of dead British airmen lying in state in their parents' parlours down the street.

As children we could immediately identify all aircraft from a few seconds of engine noise as we sheltered under our school desks whilst the enemy machine gunned civilians in the street outside. We thought we had just as terrifying a time as did those who fought the war as we, with no arms, no battle plan, no intelligence of the enemy, watched the dogfights, saw sticks of bombs tumbling into our fields and churches and schools and homes, blinked with terror as the streams of machine gun bullets and tracer poured into our roofs and windows, watched aeroplanes of ours and theirs plummeting in great infernos to the ground, as we ran to help allied flyers landing in their parachutes or ran off in terror if they were Germans in their evil tight leather helmets and intimidating goggles.

But the Battle of Britain also reminds us of great men like Cheshire who fearlessly did his duty then and after the war spent his life working on errands of mercy. Not least was his contribution as a Shroud protagonist.

REX MORGAN



*Photo by permission of The Imperial War Museum.*

GROUP CAPTAIN LEONARD CHESHIRE, V.C., 1945

**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD - AN APPRECIATION****- REX MORGAN**

Group Captain Lord Geoffrey Leonard Cheshire, Victoria Cross, Order of Merit, Distinguished Service Order (and two Bars), Distinguished Flying Cross, Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Gregory the Great, died at the age of 74 on 31st July 1992.

Cheshire, VC, as he was widely known for fifty years, had many claims to distinction. He was one of Britain's most highly decorated World War II pilots; he was the Founder of the Cheshire Foundation Homes for the disabled and co-founder of the Ryder Cheshire Mission for the Relief of Suffering; and he spent his entire life after the end of World War II working for peace and the relief of suffering of his fellow human beings.

All this, and much detail of it, is recorded in the many obituaries published after his death last month. But what was virtually unmentioned, especially in the British press, and even the religious press, both of whom knew better but chose to ignore it, was his enormous contribution to the publicising of the Holy Shroud of Turin. Indeed, he was one of the first people in Britain to go about actively promoting the study of the Shroud, albeit in an unorthodox manner with his converted bus containing a photographic exhibition.

But it is important to know something of Cheshire's life in the War as it provided the background and the catalyst for his later activities of which Shroud study was only one. So, despite the fact that his wartime story does not at first appear to be directly related to this journal's Shroud studies, I nevertheless record some of it.

**A good average chap**

Cheshire was born in Oxford in September 1917, son of a university Law Professor, and was educated at the Dragon School, Stowe School and Merton College, Oxford, where he read jurisprudence. At prep school he was small for his age, slight of build and of a quiet disposition but he worked hard at all his studies and at sports which he did not much like and was described, as he finished school, as 'a good average chap'. A few months before he took his Higher Certificate in Classics in 1935 his father sent him to Germany where he lived at Potsdam with the family of Admiral von Reuter, of World War I fame, but moved out when the Admiral attempted to persuade the young Cheshire to espouse the Nazi philosophy.

After staying with another German family he returned to England, and to Merton College, with a passion for a supercharged Alfa Romeo car and a

**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD** contd)

great love for drinking, partying and fast driving. He once held the speed record for the journey from Hyde Park Corner to the front gates of his Oxford college. In due course he joined the Oxford University Air Squadron as a not very good pilot and was subsequently given a permanent commission in the Royal Air Force in 1939.

**One hundred missions**

His legendary wartime career led to his being the youngest Group Captain in the Royal Air Force at the age of 24, having led numerous bombing raids over Germany as the leader of the No 102 Squadron. His promotion took him into the command of a land base and he then insisted on reverting his rank to Wing Commander so that he could again take to the air. He joined the famous Dam Busters, 617 Squadron, and by the time he was taken out of air duty again, he had flown an astonishing one hundred missions. The maximum allowed was thirty and very few pilots survived even to that many. Cheshire developed, led and taught a new method of low-level flying with precision marker bomb dropping to enable his squadron to make their strikes from the height of a few hundred feet. He ultimately was able to exchange his Lancaster bomber for a Mustang in which he led all his attack missions from the front.

He also led the historic exercise in which at the Normandy landings his Squadron acted as decoys by dropping great clouds of strips of metal thus confusing German radar. The German gun emplacements attacked what they thought to be a massive air invasion 150 miles north of Normandy whilst the real British invasion took place. One of his last bombing missions was to destroy the massive long-range German guns hidden in subterranean concrete tunnels ready to launch the V3 version of the deadly self propelled rocket bombs. These he successfully destroyed thus ensuring that Hitler's V3 never got off the ground as a weapon.

**Crusader for peace**

He was taken out of Bomber Command and regarded as a pilot 'second to none'. His last mission was to be Churchill's special official British observer of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki which event promptly ended World War Two. It was on that flight, in the American Flying Fortress, that Cheshire came to realise the appalling nature of wartime destruction. In the concluding words of the account of this incident, Cheshire's biographer, Russdell Braddon, says:

**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD (contd)**

"In that split second of nuclear fission came the greatest moment of truth in his life. Now and inevitably, Cheshire, the supremely efficient man of war, the much decorated hero of one hundred mortal raids against the enemy, became Cheshire, crusader for peace."

In later life he always argued for the decisions of the war saying that the dropping of the atomic bombs prevented far greater destruction and loss of life had the war continued. He said:

"...given such an evil, the moral imperative clearly required an end to the killing in the shortest possible time and with the minimum loss of life. This was precisely the goal of the bomber offensive, and the atom bombs on Japan, and even in hindsight no better alternative has been found. Yes, we must love our enemies, but when faced with one group of people gunning down another, how else can one fulfil that duty?"

**Failed dismally**

After the war Cheshire was determined to do something worthwhile and attempted to set up self-supporting communes of ex-service personnel. His philosophy then was:

"The experience of war has taught us that there are qualities and talents in all men which everyday life never gave a chance. These we will exploit.... Our first task will be to make ourselves self-supporting.... Whatever we lack in skill or resources we will make up for with hard work and unity... Therefore we will farm.... and carry on any productive industry which lies within our power.... train those who need it.... use our pooled endeavours and resources not to make our fortunes but to help each and every member ...."

Of course, like every other group of commune idealists, they failed dismally and returned to the reality of free enterprise and the layered, interdependent social system of life in the twentieth century.

**Catholic convert**

At this time Cheshire's health failed and during his recuperation he conceived the idea of travelling with a religious message, which is where he became involved with the Shroud. He also started what became the Cheshire homes by providing a place for dying people who were taking up space in hospitals. The profundity of the effect on him of nursing the dying caused him to become a Catholic convert and he remained a deeply religious man for the rest of his life.

In 1956 he met Sue Ryder [whom he married in 1959] who was pursuing charitable work with ex-service personnel in Poland and together they established the Ryder-

## CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD (cont'd)

Cheshire Homes throughout the world to care for sufferers of TB, leprosy and mental handicap.

When, in 1952, Cheshire contracted TB, he had been about to start his religious mission. During those many months of illness he recorded his talks and these were relayed through loudspeakers on his bus, later several buses, which toured London and the provinces. His pamphlets were given away and his booklets sold and the whole mission became a major exercise. Central to the bus exhibition was the portrait of Christ as on the Shroud.

### **Authenticity**

It is interesting to record that Cheshire was first confronted with the Shroud portrait when he was about to undergo a TB operation in 1953. A couple had visited him with a copy of the painting of the Shroud face by Sister Genevieve of Lisieux. For the next five weeks Cheshire did little but look at the picture hanging on his hospital wall and became convinced that it should be published as widely as possible, a pursuit he continued for the rest of his life. Cheshire was convinced of the Shroud's authenticity, even then, and promoted the portrait as something to challenge faith and have an immediate visual impact on the beholder, as it still does, of course, today.

Vera Barclay reported a contemporary London newspaper article headlined, "HOLY SHROUD GIVES SILENT WITNESS IN LONDON" which continued: "I have read many books on the Holy Shroud. I have closely studied reproductions. But never until I saw this six-foot picture, have I realised how amazing is the combination of supreme suffering and supreme majesty in the Face."

There was intense interest in Cheshire's buses and the message they brought to a nation still recovering from the drastic effects of war on mind, body, soul and environment. Cheshire received thousands of letters a week and the exhibitions were mobbed wherever they went.

### **Story of Shroud**

In due course he wrote a booklet which was sold from the bus exhibition and did a great deal to spread information about the Shroud. The press began to take up the story and accurate and non-sensational articles were published at that time, many of them written by Cheshire himself. A headline of the time read: "V.C. TELLS THE STORY OF SHROUD. PAMPHLET FROM HOSPITAL AROUSES WIDE INTEREST"

Cheshire discovered that when enlarging the photograph of the Shroud Face it became clearer as it was made bigger.

**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD(cont'd)**

He came into contact with Fr Edward Wuenschel, the virtual founder of Shroud Studies in America, who had been a member of the Shroud Commission in Rome. Fortunately all Wuenschel's vast research library on the subject is now housed in New York under the care of Father Adam Otterbein and the Holy Shroud Guild. In 1953 Wuenschel wrote to Cheshire:

**The Holy Face**

"I take the liberty to write to you because of our mutual interest in the Holy Shroud. Around Easter I was sent a copy of your pamphlet - I congratulate you, and hope it will have the widest possible circulation...

"It is true that the Christ of the Shroud speaks a language that everyone can understand, even those who would not be caught in church or with a copy of the Gospels in their hands. There are cases in which the effect might also be compared with the conversion of St Paul on the road to Damascus. And among Catholics there are cases like this. A woman opened her purse to take out a phial of poison with which she intended to commit suicide. A picture of the Holy Face slipped out - received just a few hours before from a priest who suspected her inner state and pleaded with her in vain. She had thrust the picture in her purse without even looking at it, but now it was like a living apparition with a look of reproach and mercy that she could not resist. Instead of taking poison she went to confession. If the Shroud is authentic one would expect that sort of thing."

**Cheshire replied:**

"It is clear that the Holy Shroud corresponds to a need in the people, and interest shown in it is quite extraordinary. A Holy Sepulchre is, after all, the Good Friday counterpart of a Christmas Crib. I don't see, now that we have the Holy Shroud, why it shouldn't become as popular and universal as the Crib."

**Enrie**

Through Wuenschel's introduction of Cheshire to Giuseppe Enrie, who had photographed the Shroud in 1931 and 1933 his still excellent pictures (then and today) of the Shroud were brought to England and he gave Cheshire the right to reproduce and distribute them there. Enrie was so pleased with the quality of the reproduction that he encouraged the English prints and thousands were distributed, as they still are, all over the world.

In addition to this enormous work of publicising the Shroud worldwide Cheshire also made a documentary film about it, the only one in circulation in



**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD(cont'd)**

English, I believe, until the David Rolfe production of *The Silent Witness* in 1978 based on Ian Wilson's book *The Turin Shroud*.

**Josephine Woollam**

But there is another extraordinary involvement of Cheshire with the Shroud, completely ignored by the obituary press and by most other writings. Those of us involved with the Shroud and exhibitions about it are frequently asked whether the Shroud has ever had any connection with "miracles" or "miracle cures" as is claimed for many other relics and sites. The answer has always been in the negative since neither the Church nor anyone else has claimed such properties for the Shroud. There is one recorded case in ancient history, that of the Shroud being taken to King Abgar V in Edessa shortly after the Crucifixion and leading to a cure. There has never been a series of such claims for the Shroud.

An interesting case however involved Leonard Cheshire. It is briefly recorded in general books about the Shroud [and at length in Cheshire's 1956 book, *Pilgrimage to the Shroud*] and concerns the little girl, Josephine Woollam. No one has documented or investigated it so well, however, as Father Charles Foley of Devon, England, an erudite and wise retired Catholic priest now well into his eighties and an occasional contributor to *Shroud News*.

In his excellent book *The Holy Shroud - Mirror of Christ* (1985) Foley describes the Woollam case and, indeed, he makes out a strong case for his own belief that a miracle cure occurred in the case of Josie Woollam. His description of the girl's own conviction that the Shroud would cure her of osteomyelitis and her convincing Cheshire to take her to Turin via King Umberto in Portugal is so complete that it seems apposite to reproduce it in full in this Cheshire issue of *Shroud News*.

**Discussion**

It was also interesting that when I had a discussion with Cheshire in September 1981 we talked about Josie Woollam who had died in June that year. He told me that on the anniversary of the day Josie had received the picture of the Holy Face from him she went into hospital and shortly afterwards died. Cheshire had, of course, attended the funeral. He also described to me the extraordinary occasion when he took her to Turin again in 1978 when the whole city gave them an exceptional welcome and remembered both her and her story (which is recounted in the extract from Father Foley's book in this issue). They had attended a concelebrated mass of 500 priests and were seated a few feet from the Shroud.

**CHESHIRE, V.C. AND THE SHROUD(cont'd)**

It was during this conversation that Cheshire said to me: "There is so much attention concentrated on the new scientific discoveries that there is a danger of overlooking the meaning of the Shroud and what it has got to tell us." His characteristic of gentleness, described by many who knew him, was the overriding quality of that conversation. One of Britain's greatest warriors had become one of the world's greatest workers for peace, not pacifism or unilateral disarmament, because he realised that such concepts "Just do not fit the real world in which we live."

**Visits to Australia**

This remarkable man, one of the most highly decorated men of the War and one of the most highly honoured in civil life, regarded by many as a "saint", made many visits to Australia. During the last one in 1991, as reported by Frank Devine in *The Australian*, Air Marshal Jake Newham, former chief of the RAAF and honorary chairman of the Ryder-Cheshire Foundation in Australia introduced him to the cadets of the Australian Defence Force Academy. He was subsequently invited to be their guest speaker at graduation. He spoke to the young military leaders of the future of their duty to master, to the limit of their ability, the skills of their profession, and of the ways of courage would come to them when they needed it. He also said to them: "God has a plan for all of us and the most important thing of all is to try as best we can to live out that plan."

Even more recently a special memorial service was held for Cheshire [who died on 31 July 1992] in Sydney at which Newham described him as "one of the few great men of this century; his work in the field of alleviating human suffering, together with that of his wife, Lady Ryder of Warsaw, has few parallels in history - it may well be unique."

And so, with all the proper attention to his wartime courage and performance of duty, and his subsequent lifetime of good works which has been accorded by the general media and the public, this issue of *Shroud News* focuses on that aspect of his life almost totally ignored by the media and its writers: his great work for and involvement with the study of the Holy Shroud.

The world has lost a great war hero and post war humanitarian; the Shroud world has lost an early and vigorous campaigner for the increase in knowledge about it.



AT TRURO, CORNWALL, 1952

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM

TAKEN FROM THE BOOK: *THE HOLY SHROUD - MIRROR OF CHRIST*

- **Revd CHARLES FOLEY**

Father Charles Foley is a retired Catholic priest living in Devon, England, who has written many articles and books about the Shroud. He is an indefatigable researcher and has written a number of articles for *Shroud News*. He examines the possibility of Josephine Woollam's cure qualifying for being regarded as a miracle in this comprehensive account of the involvement of Group Captain Leonard Cheshire with her.

### MORE THAN I WENT TO ASK FOR

Josephine Woollam was born in 1945 and romped through the first four years of life, a happy and healthy child. Then came trouble. She caught the pyogenic bacteria which causes osteomyelitis, and the acutely painful inflammation of the bones and marrow began to spread. By the time she was ten years old she had spent more time in hospitals than she had spent at home. Head, lungs, legs were all affected with the malignant spread of the disease: at one time she had thirteen abscesses on her head alone. The infection focus was in her left hip, as a consequence of which her left leg ceased to grow from her third year onwards; by her tenth year the left leg was some eight inches shorter than the right, and the left foot was twisted pointing directly downwards. The septicaemia resulted in multiple abscesses in bones, lungs and scalp. In 1952

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (Contd)

she had to be put into traction and that with lying in a frame was no help to her at all. She was being worn down physically and mentally. Her weight was a mere 3 stone (19 kilos).

In 1955 Group Captain Cheshire V.C. of the Royal Air Force wrote a short article for the magazine *Picture Post*, with several excellent illustrations. Josie's father brought the magazine home, and Josie having lost so much schooling did not read too well, but she became avidly interested in the illustrations, especially the one on the central pages of the Holy Face. That happened on the Tuesday of Holy Week in that year. On Good Friday Josie's mind was centred on the Crucifixion and about 3 p.m. she asked her mother to read out the meditations of the Way of the Cross (a devotion found in every Catholic book of prayers). After that she said several times that if she could see the Holy Shroud she knew she would walk again, and her heart-sore mother murmured her agreement. Later the same day Josie's temperature shot up to an alarming 103°F and she was rushed to hospital, but ominously her condition continued to deteriorate. Her lungs began to haemorrhage, and in the first days of May she was coughing up more than a cupful of blood each day. Mr Stallman, the surgeon in charge, had to tell her mother the child was dying. So the priest was called and administered the Anointing and the Viaticum. She could not eat but she steadily repeated that if she could only see the Shroud she knew she would get well again.

On May 9 Mrs Woollam wrote to G.C. Cheshire 'I am writing to ask you if my daughter Josephine could be blessed with a relic of the Holy Shroud. She is ten years old, and is in hospital with osteomyelitis in hip and leg. Also a lung abscess. Her doctor has told me that there is no hope of her getting better. She has been in and out of hospitals for the last five years. On Friday she received the Last Rites of the Church. Josephine has asked me to write to you, and she said that if only she could see the relic she will get better, and walk again. Everyone at the hospital has been very good to her. She is always in great pain, but she has always got a smile ... I know I am asking for great things but I do hope and pray that my prayers will be answered for my daughter to get better. I remain. Mrs. Veronica Woollam.'

It is obvious from reading that simple statement of faith and hope, with its perceptible undertones, that she did not hold out any great hope of success. She is steady and solid and firm, and she prays wholeheartedly. Back came the answer from someone in the Group Captain's office, sending a beautiful photograph of the Face from the Shroud, with an explanatory letter pointing out that there were no relics of the Shroud; that the Shroud was two thousand miles away in Turin, rarely brought out for public exposition; and only under strict security conditions etc. This was all that could be done in the

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (cont'd)

circumstances, for the G.C. was away at the time. He was told about the letter from the dying girl when he did return, and says that he could not get the request out of his mind.

Then came two letters in quick succession. Josephine was no longer on her deathbed, but was whizzing about the ward in a wheelchair. 'The doctor could hardly believe his eyes when he saw her in a wheelchair on Friday.' The second letter reported that a few days afterwards, Josie had been sent home from the hospital, better than she had been for a long time.

I spent some hours with Mrs. Woollam in October 1984, and I asked her to be specific about the account of what happened. At the same time I have also confirmed the facts with Pauline Woollam (Josephine's sister). 'When the photograph of the Holy Face from the Shroud arrived in the early morning postal delivery, I placed it up there on the mantelshelf above the fireplace where I could see it as I went about my work ... and every time I passed in front of it I prayed and prayed ...' That afternoon as she always did, she went off to see Josie in the hospital and remembers some of the staff calling to her 'You will see a great change in Josie' which she sadly acknowledged ... and when she opened the cubicle door she was confronted with an empty bed, and feared the worst. Then she heard the giggle from behind the door and found Josephine sitting up in an wheelchair and laughing at the surprise and bewilderment on her mother's face. The staff nurse recounted that at breakfast time Josie had asked if she could get up, and the nurses made her wait, thinking that they were dealing with the whims of a dying child ... but she was so emphatic that she felt quite well, that they carefully placed her in a wheelchair, and to their amazement she could not only sit up without help, not only was she chattering away like a magpie, but in short measure was motoring around the ward under her own steam. A fortnight later she was discharged from the hospital. My mental reaction to the placing of the photograph of the Face from the Shroud on the mantelpiece and the sudden recovery at the same time was 'MERE COINCIDENCE!' fortunately unspoken, because Mrs Woollam continued 'the most extraordinary thing was that not only did she get well so quickly and at exactly the time when I placed the picture in a place of honour at home, but from that day onwards no ulcer on her body suppurred. The eight ulcers on her leg never suppurred again'. Pauline added that the wounds remained open and deep, but there was never any suppuration after that day.

Josephine continued to be confined to the wheelchair, since her left foot was one problem, but also neither leg would have supported even her slight weight. On 17th June G.C. Leonard Cheshire arrived on the door step with a large picture of the Shroud, and a life sized one of the Holy Face. He sat down

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (Contd)

with Josie and explained in detail and at length all the many significant things which have been discovered about the linen, and some of its problems, and what it tells us about Our Lord's sufferings. As to her request that she should be blessed with the Shroud, that simply 'was not on' ... NO WAY could that be done ... NO WAY AT ALL. To the first part she listened with rapt attention. Of the last part she took not the slightest notice. So again he explained that the Shroud was kept locked away behind three great steel grills, each locked and sealed; it was contained in a large fire-proof safe in an enclosure above the Altars in Turin. The owner of the Shroud was the exiled King of Italy, now living in Portugal, whose permission would have to be obtained, then the permission of the Cardinal Archbishop Fossati of Turin would have to be sought, because he was the guardian of the Shroud, the Canon Lawyers, the Italian State authorities (and desperately searching for an ultimate argument) the Pope would have to be consulted ... she was asking for the impossible! She watched his mouth saying these things, nodded her agreement, and smiled but not with her eyes.

During the war Group Captain Cheshire gained the highest award for bravery which England can bestow, the Victoria Cross. One such event was the bombing of an important railway bridge in the Bay of Antheor, which failed. 'I will remember that an opportunity missed, is missed forever, and come what may I'll never hesitate again, at least not once I have caught sight of the target' so he wrote afterwards. Here he was faced with someone who practised what he preached, she saw her target, nor was she going to be deflected. Describing that day in Gloucester with Josephine he said that he looked at the scrap of a child, the deformed foot, the leg mutilated and bound up in a splint, and he listened to the steady declaration that if she saw the Shroud she would walk again 'there seemed nothing else to do except to take her to Turin'.

Easily said, not so easily done. At the time Cheshire was recovering from major chest surgery, so flying was forbidden to him. The occupant of the wheelchair was a sick child. The nurse, who it was hoped would accompany them, had to call off at the last minute. So Cheshire would have to be navigator, nurse, pilot and engine, pushing, pulling, manoeuvring and planning for them both. There was also the question of FUNDS. He had little and she had none. One might call this whole thing a venture of faith. Archbishop Grimshaw of Birmingham came to their help with the money trouble and sent them on their way to Lisbon in Portugal where lived the exiled head of the house of Savoy who have owned the Shroud for the past 500 years. He not only willingly gave them all the permissions they requested, but help with further funds which provided for the remainder of their eight days of travel. Unknown to them he also phoned to his representatives in Italy to do whatever

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (cont'd)

they could to help. At the same time he warned Cheshire that both from the ecclesiastical and the civil administration point of view, the difficulties were many, especially the summoning of important and busy people who lived at a distance in the short time limits. So our travellers started back across Europe and down to Italy. On Turin railway station they found a small group waiting for them, their accommodation had been arranged, the Cardinal would see them next morning. King Umberto had indeed smoothed the way for them.

When Cardinal Fossati heard that they wanted the Altar Safe to be opened, the Shroud removed from its sealed reliquary, with all the necessary attendance of legal, civil and ecclesiastical witnesses, with all the security arrangements put to one side, he shook his head slowly and with regret. It simply could not be done in the time ... too many people were to be inconvenienced, and the Shroud endangered. It was deadlock. It was deadlock until Josie pulled out a small parcel from the back of her wheelchair ... this contained a new pair of shoes which she was going to wear in walking home but even more importantly there was a long white lace dress which was her pride and joy 'it was a wedding dress which her aunt had made especially for the blessing' as she carefully explained to the Cardinal. His Eminence was seen to walk away rather quickly at that, to a corner of the room where he gave himself to worried thought for some minutes, before going into his study where he was heard phoning several people. On his return he said that they were to come back at 4 p.m. and if all the arrangements could be made by then perhaps the blessing could take place.

At the appointed time all the arrangements had indeed been made, the various authorities present, and Josie was dressed in her wedding frock and veil, with the new shoes tucked handily into the back of the wheelchair. There was a period of prayer, private and fervent until the Cardinal rose from his knees. Two priests went up the ladder like-steps, began breaking the seals and opening up the steel grills. The big reliquary safe, over four feet long, was withdrawn from its enclosure, brought down and placed at first on a table in front of the Altar. It was then placed across the arms of the wheelchair so that Josie could rest her hands on it, but nothing happened. The Cardinal was asked if the outer seals could be broken and the Shroud lifted out. He examined the seals, and then agreed that they should be broken. The Shroud wrapped in its red silk backing cloth was lifted out and placed in Josie's lap still tied about with its many authenticity tapes and seals. Nothing happened. Josie asked if the Shroud could be placed along the splinted left leg, and for that also the Cardinal gave permission, and the Shroud was replaced in her lap. If the Cardinal saw a small hand slip into the folds of the covering cloth, he said nothing. Finally the heavy roll of material was replaced in the



## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (cont'd)

reliquary-casket and the locks were sealed and stamped once more; the proceedings were registered and recorded and witnessed in the official documents, before the Shroud was replaced in its secure resting place.

Josephine did not get up and walk as she had imagined and wanted. She was very quiet. In the Sacristy she kissed the Cardinal's ring and thanked him for his many kindnesses; folded away her wedding dress and shoes. Nothing had happened apparently. Leonard Cheshire, the witness of those first few days says 'At first she was obviously disappointed, but in a curious way she seemed to understand a purpose, a direction. She talked very little about herself and the expected cure, but a great deal about other people and the honour which the Holy Shroud would bring to Our Lord if only the whole world could see it at will'. I have a tape which Josie made of the events of those days and which we must consider in a moment. My own reaction in listening to her and thinking over what she spoke about, is that she became WISE. Her mother came to meet them at Victoria Station in London and in reply to her question concerning what she had received in Turin Josie replied 'More than I went to ask for' ... a curious reply for such a child, and if she was a disappointed one. She added later that if she had known how much trouble it was going to cause she would not have asked to go! Josephine never at any time in her life made the claim that she was cured, but it was noticed on her return that already the deep and open and intractable ulcers, including those on her leg, were beginning to heal over. From that time until the end of her life she had no further trouble from the bone myelitis there or elsewhere, with the exception that she had a small operation at the end of 1955 to drain one ulcer. She was still confined to the wheelchair since neither of her legs would have supported her.

What is the evidence for the above statements? The orthopaedic surgeon who had looked after her from her first illness in 1949, was a member of the Royal College of Surgeons and in his notes for the beginning of 1956, Mr. Stallman records with some fascination '*It does seem that the sinuses are healed!*' In that same year Mr Merryweather, also a member of the Royal College of Surgeons, took over the duties of orthopaedic surgeon and he reports 'The osteomyelitis appears to be quiescent, and there is *nothing after that to suggest any recurrence of the bone infection*, though she was left with a ghastly disability. I eventually took the leg off because it was useless to her and she got on with an artificial leg very well afterwards' (private letter dated Oct 8, 1984). The amputation was performed in 1966. Up to this time her deformed left foot had been gripped in a sort of shoe-shape, with steel callipers on each side extending down to a false foot and shoe. She could only move about on crutches. It was a useless and clumsy prosthesis and the callipers caused

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (cont'd)

painful sores. With the artificial leg, at first with the crutches, then with a walking stick, and finally without either she walked! Mr Merryweather writes 'looking at her history as a whole, I must confess that one is struck by the fact that the end of 1955 did coincide with a long period of quiescent osteomyelitis. Was this just coincidence or was it something more?'

Josephine began to grow strong and was able at first to take on a part-time job and then a full-time occupation as a switch board operator for telephones. In 1968 she met Roy Jones and married him. They had their first child, born in 1970; unfortunately he died before his first birthday, but Richard, the second child, born in 1973, lives today with his father not far from Stroud in Gloucestershire.

My reasons for writing this account are that there has been an incorrect emphasis placed on the events: no investigation has until now taken place of the primary witnesses: and that the characteristics for the consideration of a miracle cure as laid down by Pope St Pius X have not been applied as yet to Josephine's situation. *The crucial day of the whole episode was when the photograph of the Holy Face arrived in the Woollam household and was placed in position of honour. It was on that day and at that precise time that Josephine suddenly felt well.* The trip to Turin is secondary to that although it has received all the advertisement. The primary witnesses are Mrs Woollam and the younger sister Pauline; most importantly two orthopaedic surgeons, Mr Stallman and Mr Merryweather.

The papal rules of the consideration for a miraculous cure are as follows:

1. THE ILLNESS IS GRAVELY SERIOUS AND THE CONDITION NOT IMPROVING. The child was dying and beyond medical help from a lethal disease.
2. THE CURE MUST BE INSTANTANEOUS WITH NO PERIOD OF CONVALESCENCE. The child had been ill for five years. She recovered at the precise time when her mother, unknown to her, had placed the picture on the mantelpiece. She got up from her bed, felt well. The disease did not merely ameliorate. There was no longer any suppuration from the ulcers of bone or skin. In other words the osteomyelitis was cured. She was allowed to return to her home within a short period.
3. THE RECOVERY CAN NOT BE EXPLAINED NATURALLY. The progressive malady was stopped, and the child passed from a state of most serious illness to a state of promise and health amply fulfilled. There was no suppuration from any ulcer then or during the rest of her life.
4. THERE MUST BE NO RELAPSE, NOR MERE AMELIORATION AT ANY TIME. During the remaining 26 years of her life there was no recurrence

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (cont'd)

of the osteomyelitis. The surgical reports are set down by the surgeons over their own signatures.

It should be noted that an instantaneous or even very rapid cure of osteomyelitis by natural causes is impossible. The disease attacks not a mere organ, but the surrounding tissues and bone marrow. The disease spreads by reason of the toxin invasion of the blood stream, and the lymphatic system, the bone marrow included. It penetrates the whole organism. To restore cells destroyed (in the skin, the muscles, the bones) requires new cells and such physiological operations require TIME. The cure of the WHOLE BODY instantly is an accomplishment which is medically and biologically impossible. Yet that is what happened to Josie Woollam. The multiple ulcers ceased to produce pus. The wounds remained open until she went to Turin, and again after the Holy Shroud was laid along her leg those also began to close over and healed leaving a cicatrix to mark their going. There is also a small marvel which few people recognise and that is that Josie Woollam had a privilege which few people ever have obtained ... she had a private exposition of the Holy Shroud especially for her benefit!

Not only did she walk again but as I have heard her happily say, she drove her own car, she had her husband, her child and her home and was given the strength to look after them with pride. On a tape which I have she talks quietly and evenly and without any exaggerations, never claiming anything out of the ordinary. It is most moving to listen to her trying without success to put into words what happened in Turin, she hesitates, falters and halts. Three times she tries to describe, to explain and ends 'It is difficult to put into words ... it was a special grace ... whatever it was, it changed my whole outlook, my whole state of mind.' Leonard Cheshire says of her that she became selfless, quiet in mind, that she had that peace which the world cannot give. Her sister Pauline worries that she cannot describe her own reactions at this time, much less Josie's but she uses the word 'happy' a number of times. That is something which Josephine herself stresses, she received a calm in the depths of her mind, all the things which had irritated her in the past seemed to fade, such as being a burden to others, having to rely on others for help and that it would always be so as far as she was concerned, she realised that there was going to be suffering and pain, she was even able to accept the loss of her first baby, though her voice always drops a tone or two when she mentions that. 'Something changed for me in Turin. I cannot describe it but it has enabled me to accept my life just as it is ... I felt then very close to Jesus, not emotionally or sentimentally, but I can walk after Him now. Something was given to me that day, a grace to face the daily troubles of living. I am happy and content, and that has stayed with me every day ever since.' Listening to the voice one realises that that was

## CHESHIRE AND JOSIE WOOLLAM - FOLEY (contd)

indeed so. She died in the first weeks of June, 1981. God rest her lovely soul.

This account would be incomplete without mention emphasis of two people. Mrs VERONICA Woollam is aptly named. She is tiny and soft spoken and she talks as if she met our Lord last week in the Superstore. With affection I compare her with the mother St Matthew writes about (15:21-28). One can easily imagine our Lord nodding and smiling at this mother also 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done unto you as you desire, and her daughter was healed at the same hour.' Secondly Mr Merryweather. Among the tiresome questions that I directed to him was the fact that Josephine died of bronchiectasis (i.e. dilatation of the bronchial tubes commonly due to the formation of fibrous tissue in the lungs). I remembered Josephine talking about and distinguishing between the osteomyelitis and the lung trouble which she said was due to having had pneumonia when she was young. His thought-provoking reply is a summary of these events. 'The basic infection was a septicaemia (the presence in the blood stream of bacteria and their toxins). The bone abscesses were a result of this, as was the bronchiectasis, though I believe that the bronchiectasis did not arise until after the osteomyelitis, so one could say that it was secondary to that'. He continues *'There are certainly things which in this remarkable story cannot be explained scientifically.* We all know the power of mind over body. It seems to me that even a totally nonreligious person would have to admit that something happened to Josephine which changed her mental attitude with a consequent effect on her illness. That I think is the least that could be said, and many would put a much more spiritual interpretation on it'.



Cheshire in 1989 with volunteers assisting him to establish the World War Memorial Fund

This is the full text of the extremely lengthy citation for the award to  
Leonard Cheshire of the Victoria Cross, Britain's highest award for  
gallantry. The citation is unique in that the V.C. is normally awarded for a  
single act of gallantry

VC, 8 September 1944 (Wing Commander, No. 617 Squadron, R.A.F.V.R.):

'This officer began his operational career in June, 1940. Against strongly defended targets he soon displayed the courage and determination of an exceptional leader. He was always ready to accept extra risks to ensure success. Defying the formidable Ruhr defences, he frequently released his bombs from below 2,000 feet. Over Cologne in November, 1940, a shell burst inside his aircraft, blowing out one side and starting a fire; undeterred, he went on to bomb his target. About this time, he carried out a number of convoy patrols in addition to his bombing missions.

At the end of his first tour of operational duty in January, 1941, he immediately volunteered for a second. Again, he pressed home his attacks with the utmost gallantry. Berlin, Bremen, Cologne, Duisberg, Essen and Kiel were among the heavily defended targets which he attacked. When he was posted for instructional duties in January, 1942, he undertook four more operational missions.

He started a third operational tour in August, 1942, when he was given command of a squadron. He led the squadron with outstanding skill on a number of missions before being appointed in March, 1943, as a station commander.

In October, 1943, he undertook a fourth operational tour, relinquishing the rank of group captain, at his own request so that he could again take part in operations. He immediately set to work as the pioneer of a new method of marking enemy targets involving very low flying. In June, 1944, when marking a target in the harbour at Le Havre in broad daylight and without cloud cover, he dived well below the range of the light batteries before releasing his marker bombs, and he came very near to being destroyed by the strong barrage which concentrated on him.

During his fourth tour which ended in July, 1944, Wing Commander Cheshire led his squadron

personally on every occasion, always undertaking the most dangerous and difficult task of marking the target alone from a low level in the face of strong defences.

Wing Commander Cheshire's cold and calculated acceptance of risks is exemplified by his conduct in an attack on Munich in April, 1944. This was an experimental attack to test out the new method of target marking at low level against a heavily defended target situated deep in Reich territory. Munich was selected, at Wing Commander Cheshire's request, because of the formidable nature of its light anti-aircraft and searchlight defences. He was obliged to follow, in bad weather, a direct route which took him over the defences of Augsburg and thereafter he was continuously under fire. As he reached the target, flares were being released by our high flying aircraft. He was illuminated from above and below. All guns within range opened fire on him. Diving to 700 feet, he dropped his markers with great precision and began to climb away. So blinding were the searchlights that he almost lost control. He then flew over the city at 1,000 feet to assess the accuracy of his work and direct other aircraft. His own was badly hit by shell fragments but he continued to fly over the target area until he was satisfied that he had done all in his power to ensure success. Eventually, when he set course for base, the task of disengaging himself from the defences proved even more hazardous than the approach. For a full twelve minutes after leaving the target area he was under withering fire but he came safely through.

Wing Commander Cheshire has now completed a total of 100 missions. In four years of fighting against the bitterest opposition he has maintained a record of outstanding personal achievement, placing himself invariably in the forefront of the battle. What he did in the Munich operation was typical of the careful planning, brilliant execution and contempt for danger which has established for Wing Commander Cheshire a reputation second to none in Bomber Command.'

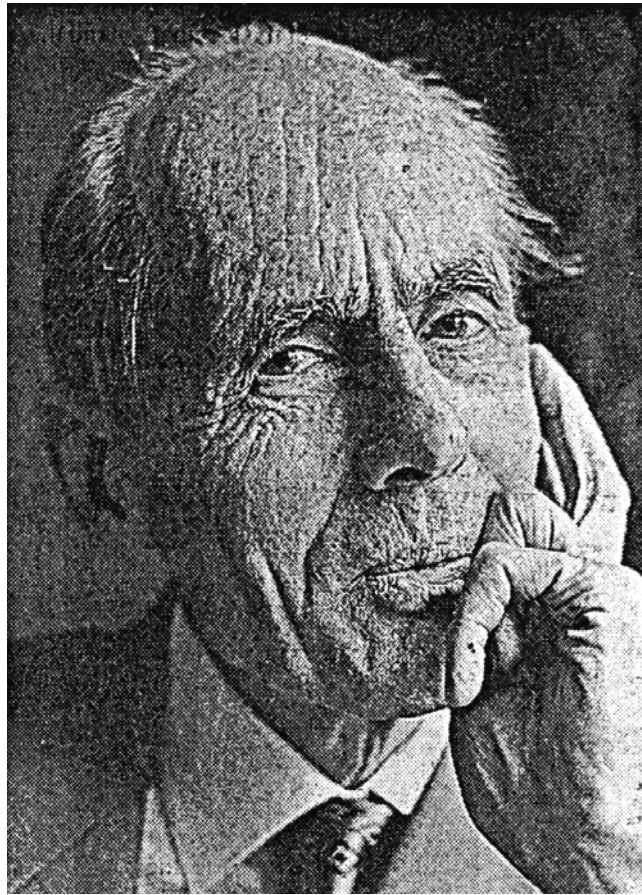


**LEONARD CHESHIRE, VC, tells us about what he believes to be the world's oldest 'photograph', showing**

## **HOW CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED**

*For centuries, the Holy Shroud of Turin, a strip of linen which is believed to have covered Christ's body in the tomb, has been venerated by many. Leonard Cheshire, a convert to the Catholic faith, tells how, after 1,900 years, the Shroud was first photographed, and how this revealed a face and figure showing signs of an agony and death exactly similar to that of Christ as described by the writers of the four Gospels.*

Reproduction of part of the first page of a major article on the Shroud which appeared in *Picture Post* 9th April 1953. It was this article which was seen by Josie Woollam leading to her extraordinary demand of Leonard Cheshire that he take her to the Shroud



Cheshire said of the Man in the Shroud:

"See a man who is dead, and yet somehow not dead, as though in command of death itself; a man with whom we feel perfectly at home, yet whom, if he were to call us, we could not help but obey."

What better epitaph could there be for Leonard Cheshire?

*Shroud News* began in 1980 when Rex Morgan, author of three books on the subject of the Holy Shroud (*Perpetual Miracle*, *Shroud Guide*, and *The Holy Shroud and the Earliest Paintings of Christ*) started putting together a few notes about current developments in Sindonology (the study of the Shroud of Turin) for a small circle of interested people in his home country of Australia. He didn't expect it to go beyond a few issues.

The bulletin now reaches subscribers all over the world and it is written and produced and the information disseminated more quickly than most news-sheets of a similar kind or the more prestigious Shroud publications. It contains information, news, articles and illustrations gathered from sources of Shroud study worldwide through Rex Morgan's extensive network of personal connections with what has been described as the "Shroud Crowd".

Rex Morgan is a frequent traveller overseas and this has given him the opportunity to keep abreast of latest developments in Shroud study and research at first hand. He was present at the world media preview of the Shroud itself in August 1978 in Turin, Italy and has met with numerous Shroud researchers in many countries. His quest for Shroud information became, as he described it, "a passionate hobby". He brought the world-famous Photographic Exhibition created by Brooks Institute, California, to Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Macau and Canada and during those tours it attracted more than 600,000 visitors. The exhibition was subsequently donated by Brooks Institute to the non-profit making organisation, The South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud (SEARCH) of which Morgan is President. He is also a member of the Board of Directors of the USA based Association of Scientists and Scholars International for the Shroud of Turin (ASSIST) and was a member of the scientific team which conducted environmental experiments in a Jerusalem tomb in 1986 (The Environmental Study of the Shroud in Jerusalem). He has made several original contributions to the research of the Shroud, has presented papers at international conferences, has written many articles and given numerous broadcasts and telecasts on the subject in many countries.

The list of *Shroud News* subscribers continues to increase internationally and the publication has been described many times as one of the best available. Its production is obviously privately subsidised as we still request a subscription in Australia of only \$6 for six issues posted. *Shroud News* comes out six times per year. The USA subscription is \$US 6 (posted surface mail) or \$US 12 (posted airmail). Postage to other countries varies. ALL back issues are available at \$1 (US or Aust) each plus postage charges except the famous 50th issue which is \$3 plus post.

Please encourage those of your acquaintance to take out their own subscription rather than borrow your copies since the more genuine subscribers we have the more we can improve the bulletin and the longer it is likely to survive.

All information and opinion in this newsletter is published in good faith. It is edited (and mainly written) by Rex Morgan and published by:

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