

EDITORIAL

Jewish history reminds us in Leviticus 25:2 that "A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be." In the fiftieth year the Hebrews celebrated the passing of seven sabbaths of years, forty-nine, by resting from their tilling of the land and by restoring all properties to their original owners or heirs; all bondsmen were liberated and it is believed that all debts were cancelled.

JUBILEE

The word jubilee, as it has come to us from the Middle English, is applied nowadays to a number of significant celebrations of chronology, particularly for the fiftieth, as a "golden jubilee". This fiftieth edition of *Shroud News* is, then, the golden jubilee issue. Strangely its appearance does not follow the tradition of the Hebrew jubilee in Leviticus for it virtually reverses all those matters mentioned there. Those of us in the Shroud Crowd will not rest from our tilling of the land but rather have we been inspired to dig deeper into the productive depths of the mystery of the Shroud, now made even greater by the combined hand of science and the Church in October this year. We are unable to restore the Shroud to its original owners for there have been so many of them and so speculative are their identities through its recorded history over about 2000 years. Those of us who are bondsmen in the service of trying to solve or at least illumine the mystery of the Shroud and of disseminating knowledge concerning it are hardly likely to be liberated at this time in its history but rather to become more committed. And anyone associated with the study of this remarkable object is far more prone to plunge into greater personal debt rather than have his debts cancelled as the quest continues with greater fervour than ever before.

INITIAL STIMULUS

It is difficult to believe that more than eight years ago, in September 1980, I wrote the first issue of *Shroud News* and that it has persisted and grown so remarkably over that space of time, its format to be copied, indeed, by at least four other similar publications over the years. It is equally interesting to reflect upon the initial stimulus for that original publication. I have never had much faith in the media in general, as one who in his early professional life had a great deal to do with newspaper reporters and radio and television interviewers. The widespread deterioration in the quality of the media of the world has accelerated rapidly in the last few years, perhaps as a manifestation of multi-media ownership, and with virtual dictatorship of policy the media of the world can now create the result of national government elections and determine when they will occur, can dismiss elected leaders when it thinks fit, can bring to millions of people misery and distress they would otherwise have been spared by forever suggesting to them that the material aspects of twentieth century life are there for the taking by everyone

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thus falsely raising their expectations irrespective of their commitment to responsibility or earning privilege as a result of plain hard work. Governments and the media have become the pawns of trendy minority groups whose often ill-conceived views and ill-founded ideas are increasingly loudly and rabidly peddled to a decreasingly literate readership whose opinions are ready-made for them chiefly, in "civilised" countries, through watching television programmes controlled and smugly presented by immature personalities in their twenties and with little experience of life or responsibility or example-setting or of those problems and burdens upon public and private shoulders which they choose to present to their audiences with their apparently innate lust for scandal and their total disrespect (except in totalitarian or military regimes) for everyone whether a great leader or the poor victim of some personal tragedy.

SENSIBLE DISCUSSION

Thus it is that serious matters of study and interest like the Holy Shroud of Turin received scant attention in the media before 1978 and, indeed, when, in September 1980, a private lecture to the British Society for the Turin Shroud, given by micro-analyst Dr Walter McCrone, was, contrary to agreement at the time, widely publicised throughout the tabloid world as claiming that the Shroud was no more than a medieval painting, it seemed to me then that another small contribution to the sensible discussion and propagation of Shroud matters was due and particularly in Australia where knowledge of the Shroud was very sparse.

FULL TURNING OF CIRCLE

In a sense, today's landmark in the history of *Shroud News* could be interpreted as the full turning of a circle. Its first issue was spawned as a result of and reaction to wide publicity claiming the Shroud to be a fake, on the slenderest of evidence and the opinion of one man, whose views have, in any event, subsequently been totally discredited, and here at the fiftieth issue the world has again been belaboured about the ears and eyes and intellect with the news, purported even to have the blessing of the Church, its owner, that science has "proved the Shroud to be a fake". It is strangely significant, too, that a long-time collaborator of McCrone, Revd David Sox, was at the very heart of the recent carbon-14 scandal since he is the one who obtained access, improperly it would seem, to the early results of the Zurich laboratory and by his own admission, I understand, initiated the "leaks" to the press of the "medieval date" long before the laboratories had submitted their reports either to the British Museum or to the Shroud officials at Turin or in the Vatican. It has even been suggested that this was a carefully orchestrated ploy to place the Church in the position of having little

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alternative but to suggest that all three laboratories should collude to produce a medieval result to save face for itself in a generally sceptical age or that the laboratories might have done so to save face for themselves at a time when the credibility for an as yet unproven scientific process and considerable dependence on more business and handouts to keep them employed is quite significant in their corporate thinking. I am quite convinced, as are numerous Shroud experts throughout the world, that we are a long way from hearing the end of this matter and that when the truth is known about the protocol, the procedures, the politics and perhaps even the payola of the whole carbon-14 exercise, there will be a very different story from the "Science proves Shroud a Fake" illogicality which was trumpeted worldwide by a gloating and misinformed media.

INTERESTING AND CHALLENGING

As I said in Issue 49 I am willing to be convinced that the Shroud is a medieval painting or anything else but my knowledge of the subject makes it perfectly clear that it simply cannot be. Thus the search for the answer to the mystery continues for me, and, it appears, for every other sindonologist in the world. The fact that a great number of the general public, whose knowledge of the Shroud was sharply increased after 1978, have taken precisely the same view, despite the newspapers they have read and the television programmes they have inhaled since October, suggests that the Shroud will not be put down lightly and that the October announcements are simply another interesting and challenging stage in the development of the knowledge of this remarkable piece of cloth.

SHROUD ODYSSEY

Shroud News grew in size and content during its first years and became the vehicle for disseminating various aspects of the subject, never claiming to be a thoroughly researched prestigious publication like, for example, *Shroud Spectrum International*, or the longest standing learned journal *Sindon* (which one hopes to see again one day). *Shroud News* was and still is just one man's gathering of information from many aspects and many sources, some more, some less academic. But tied in with the development of the newsletter has been my own Shroud Odyssey as I have described it from time to time. There is enough in my journey with the subject over twelve years to be able to write an autobiography simply of Shroud matters as they have affected me.

WORLDWIDE VEHICLE

I am astonished to see how the number of contributors has increased as *Shroud News* has become accepted as a worldwide vehicle. There have been numerous articles by other people from many standpoints and I have always tried, given that

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I have had the material, to cover history, science, religion, art, photography, medicine, mysticism and the numerous other headings under which one might place this or that paper or article.

As my own knowledge of the subject has increased over the years so have the opportunities for writing for journals, making radio and television shows and interviews, giving public lectures and speaking at seminars and conferences. Over this period I have had the privilege of making many hundreds of broadcasts and telecasts and of speaking in a dozen different countries about the Shroud.

DIRECT INTERCHANGE

One of the most important breakthroughs in my own Shroud involvement came in April 1981 when I was invited to attend the Opening of the Exhibition of Photography of the Shroud at the Brooks Institute in Santa Barbara, California. Not only did this become, as both Brooks and I were later to discover, the beginning of a great venture in bringing the exhibition to the Far East, but it also gave me the opportunity to meet a number of the members of the STURP team and many other sindonologists. And from there, since I have the opportunity to travel quite extensively each year, I was able to build up a large network of Shroud contacts throughout the world by seeking them out and meeting them personally. It is this direct interchange which brings a great deal of sharp focus onto the views and fields of expertise of individuals. I had thought of cataloguing all the acknowledged Shroud experts I have met but this would, I suspect, be a boring exercise for the reader and look like a name-dropping glad-handing show.

A KIND OF FREEMASONRY

I have to remember though, and acknowledge, that it was Father Adam Otterbein, the president of the Holy Shroud Guild of the USA, who led me to Santa Barbara and initiated me into the Shroud Crowd in person. From that day there followed personal meetings and friendships with numerous men and women in many countries which have deepened not only my appreciation of their work and commitment but have also led to some very important collaborations. And this is a very significant aspect of Shroud study: that there is a kind of freemasonry (if my numerous Catholic friends will not object to that term) amongst sindonologists just as there is, I suppose, with any other world-encircling group of people interested in the same discipline.

SUCCESSORS

One of the very serious aspects of Shroud study which has exercised my mind, particularly over recent times, is the need for every single Shroud scholar to make sure he or she has a successor. I have met several who did and several who did

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not who have departed this life. One thinks, for example, of Max Frei and although he had no successor to continue his work at the time of his death I am now aware that his lifework and material is in safe hands. One thinks of Father Paul de Gail whose French organisation, Les Amis de La Sainte Face, died with him and his work simply stopped. All that remains of it is a few damp cartons of material rotting in a cellar. Professor Francis Filas, whose work, like many great researchers and authors, has come to be accepted widely by his peers and fellow-workers only after his death, fortunately had his materials gathered up by the Holy Shroud Guild for posterity. But so many of the Shroud greats are now quite elderly and I certainly hope that they are making provision for their effects and papers to be passed on to younger researchers when they finally join what must by now be a very high-powered international celestial Shroud group.

600,000 PEOPLE

The bringing of the Brooks Exhibit and its later enhancement by the addition of further material has allowed me to display the story of the Shroud to more than 600,000 people in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Macau and Canada since 1983, all of which exhibitions and tours have been comprehensively reported in *Shroud News* and now to have set up the South East Asia Research Centre for the Holy Shroud (SEARCH) which will, ere long, have a permanent home in Sydney, Australia.

INVOLVEMENT

Amongst the many highlights in my personal Shroud odyssey have been my involvement in the expedition to Jerusalem for the Environmental Study of the Shroud in an ancient Jewish tomb, my appointment to the board of the Association of Scholars and Scientists for the Shroud of Turin (ASSIST), my rediscovery (sic) of the artistic work of Thomas Heaphy in the British Museum, a special and very rare private showing (for my benefit) of the famous Lier copy of the Shroud attributed to Durer, not to mention being in Turin cathedral on 26th August 1978 at the world press conference the day before the last exposition of the Shroud opened to the public, and not to mention the meetings and discussions with so many of the world's foremost sindonologists.

THE FARCE

Recent editions of *Shroud News* have tended to concentrate on such issues as the Templecombe panel which, as my readers know, is a source of great interest to me since the publication of my article "Was the Holy Shroud in England?" The other major problem to be addressed has, of course, been the carbon-14 test. This has certainly become a major issue in the minds of all sindonologists and the

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public over the past year. And this 50th issue of *Shroud News* indicates the significance of that test, or rather the significance of the unsatisfactory nature of that test. My own appraisal of the situation, in *Shroud News* 49, as a farce has been very kindly received by a wide circle of people and the fact is that most of the contributed articles in this special 50th issue take up the same criticisms of the C-14 test from different points of view but have a major consensus of opinion that the tests were inadequate, inefficient and totally over-rated in the light of the tremendous evidence for the Shroud's being more likely a first century item rather than a medieval one and the basic fact that no-one can yet demonstrate or explain or reproduce the nature of the image. Until this is done satisfactorily we cannot take for granted any other single test of its age. Indeed the exploration of the myriad other avenues of research which have yet to be done takes on a new and special significance, particularly, I believe, the historical aspects. The more we can discover now about the actual history of the Shroud, the more of the gaps we can fill in the excellent historical chronology proposed (and still not refuted on good grounds) by Ian Wilson more than ten years ago, the more compelling becomes the case for the Shroud's being precisely what so many have believed and still believe it to be: namely the burial Shroud of Christ.

Those of us who know a lot about the subject also know that the Shroud simply cannot be, is not, medieval, whatever else it might one day be shown to be. In the late twentieth century the Holy Shroud of Turin continues to draw people, fascinated, mystified, inspired, to its remarkable image and I have no doubt it will continue to do so for the rest of time. And in what short space of the rest of time I might be allotted, *Shroud News*, my books on the subject, SEARCH, and the global friendships I have made will be continued to the best of my ability.

DEDICATION

If there is one person in this world to whom millions of Shroud enthusiasts and sceptics alike owe an enormous debt of gratitude for a lifetime of work in relation to the Shroud it is Father Peter M. Rinaldi of Turin and New York. This great scholar and pastor, who has been dubbed the Grand Old Man of the Shroud, publicly and privately, has done more for its current state of knowledge than perhaps any other person living or dead, and without his prior consent, I should like to dedicate this 50th edition of *Shroud News* to him.

To all the authors of contributions to this special publication and to all who have contributed to the 816 pages of the past forty-nine, and to all my readers and therefore friends, who are also all, by proxy, Father Peter Rinaldi's friends, I offer my sincere thanks for their support and encouragement of *Shroud News*.

REX MORGAN