

## The Shroud at the Edinburgh Festival

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is the place to go to see the latest trends in theatre and the arts, the haven of irony and “alternative” productions. Hardly the place to find the Shroud, and yet that is just where any visitors to Edinburgh this summer would have seen the image on the Shroud, and various shows and talks about the latest developments in Sindonology.



The producer of Shroud documentary “The Silent Witness” David Rolfe (see the Who’s Who section in this edition) shown above in Edinburgh with his wife Anne, was running a venue at the central church of Saint Cuthbert’s, with various shows – a theatre production of *The Railway Children* for the whole family, a wonderful show by Paul Daniels (who had us all rolling on the floor with laughter over post-show drinks) and concerts by the London Community Gospel Choir. David’s own show about the Shroud and its carbon dating in 1988 (*The Naked Truth*) received good reviews in the press, although the work load of running the venue meant that he could not present it over the whole month of August as originally planned, and so I myself was not able to catch it.

After making *The Silent Witness*, Rolfe has kept up on the latest developments in Shroud studies, especially recently given that Internet has made all this much easier. Realising that a whole generation of younger people are virtually unaware of the Shroud, he decided to put on a show at Edinburgh and is now seriously thinking of producing follow-up film to *The Silent Witness*.

During the mornings at St. Cut's (as the church is affectionately known), there were various free Shroud presentations, many of which just happened as interested visitors appeared at the venue and formed discussion groups. David Onysko from the USA gave a wonderful introduction to the Shroud in general, and it was a pleasure to see him again. John and Rebecca Jackson spoke about the Shroud in Constantinople and the Jewish and Middle Eastern aspects of the cloth. They have carried out extensive research into both aspects, having designed a box showing how the Shroud could have "stood up straight" (in the words of French knight Robert de Clari, present in the Byzantine capital in 1204). The study involves an analysis of the crease marks on the Shroud (possibly affected by the recent work carried out on the Shroud) and a study of the icons showing Christ rising up out of a box with many Shroud-like characteristics.

A simpler reproduction of the box was on show in Edinburgh, designed and built by Chris D'Muhala, son of AM\*STAR president and STURP member Tom D'Muhala. Chris was in Edinburgh the whole month of August and much of the success of the venue is due to his efforts. The box did not show the configuration of the cloth used to accomplish the rather complex series of crease-marks, although it was an excellent of actually seeing the idea behind the theory.

Kim Dreisbach was also present at the Festival, giving talks and answering questions. His presentation on the Shroud received an excellent review in the local press, obtaining four stars out of a maximum of five and a hearty recommendation to see the presentation with an open mind and no pre-conceived ideas either for or against authenticity.

All in all, Edinburgh was a great idea to bring the Shroud to those who might otherwise never have a chance to hear about it in such detail.