

HOME NEWS

The Society's Spring Lecture by Dr. Kitty Little Review by Dr. Michael Clift

It was not possible for the attention to wander when **Dr. Kitty Little**, a dedicated scientist formerly of AERE Harwell, addressed the BSTS at the Society of Authors on April 26th. The title of her talk, "The Turin Shroud: How was the Image formed?", was ever before us as she presented us with some eight hypotheses and demolished them one by one with relentless logic and tenacity. Few scientists are mealy-mouthed and least of all can that be said of this knowledgeable exponent of the scientific position as seen today through a sharp and widely informed mind. The final layer of her analysis revealed that the Image could be nothing less than a miracle performed by God the Father, "and there an end". During question time a member, **Dr. Alan Mills**, suggested that such a conclusion made all the evening's exposition redundant. But science is science, we were told, and without it there can be no intelligent approach to miracles.

Dr Little's highly entertaining address was one that will not easily be forgotten whatever one's shade of opinion and was an illustration of the Society's attitude to Shroud matters, namely that all theories and all viewpoints save the most conspicuously idiotic, are grist to its mill. We can only say, "Thank you and thank you again" for her brilliant enlightenment.

[Editor's note: Dr. Little's lecture was tape-recorded (because of its length it is on two cassettes), and copies are available from **Rodney Hoare**, 23 Elm Grove Road, Salisbury SP1 1JW at the rates quoted in the Society's membership booklet. For members' further information, appended below are the various alternative hypotheses on the nature of the Shroud that Kitty Little considered in the course of her talk, rejecting some, and concluding with an endorsement of no. 8].

SUGGESTED HYPOTHESES CONCERNING THE SHROUD'S IMAGE

1. The figure depicted on the Shroud is not that of Christ.
2. Christ did not die on the Cross but was stoned to death.
3. The figure depicted on the Shroud is that of Christ.
4. The Shroud is a work of art, dating from a period before 1345, showing Christ after his death.
5. The Shroud is the actual Shroud in which Christ was buried.
6. Christ was alive when he was taken down from the Cross.
7. The chief priests' version, as recounted in the gospel: "the disciples came by night and stole him away while the guard slept," and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews' until this day. (Matt. 28:13,15).
8. Not only is the Shroud that in which Christ was buried, but the method of formation of the image is such that it could not be produced by natural means. That is, it must have been a miracle.

Another Shroud Computer Revelation - or is it?

On January 15 the London tabloid newspaper *Mail on Sunday* published a colour feature headlined 'Computer Revelation that will fuel more controversy over the Turin Shroud: Did Jesus look like this?' According to the feature's author, **Kim Willsher**, 'space-age technology' has given a 'startling new insight' into the Shroud with the use of a computer-based 'morphing' technique ('developed by NASA') to create an 'uncannily life-like' face (*see right*) from the negative image. The face in question, reproduced in apparent stages of emerging from the photographic negative, is described as 'the product of an international project which began eight years ago, when Canadian artist **Curtis Hooper** was commissioned by an American magazine to produce a drawing from the Shroud.'

Although the *Mail* represents the 'revelation' as a new point of fierce contention between enthusiast 'believers' in the Shroud, and sceptical 'researchers' (apparently represented by the Leonardo da Vinci camp), in reality the image appears to be nothing for anyone of any complexion to get excited about. On even the most cursory study it can be seen to be very similar to artist Curtis Hooper's altogether conjectural colour painting made from the Shroud face that was reproduced in *Paris Match* as long ago as October, 1984. One of several give-aways is the lock of hair falling over the left eye. There are also touches of the Algerian portrait created more than fifty years ago.