

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*In a letter dated 20 May new Member Mrs. Brenda Benton, of Cannock, Staffordshire, writes:*

As a new member of the Society I felt led to write and tell you how I became a member. It has taken twenty years to find you, so you can imagine I am very excited about it.

A few months before our only child died at the age of three, in 1978, my husband Stuart and I went on a day trip to St. Catherine's House in London. The purpose of our visit was to look up our family tree as our geneticist believed Zoe's illness was an inherited disease. Our trip to St. Catherine's House was not fruitful so with time on our hands we decided to go sight-seeing. As we walked into the Underground I noticed a poster advertising a film called *The Silent Witness*. I experienced a strong feeling that we must see this film about the Turin Shroud. We found the hotel where the film was being shown and during this time Christ and his suffering became very real to me.

At the point of Zoe's death we had the wonderful experience of meeting Jesus. His presence filled the room and I knew 'the peace which passes all understanding'. In 1984 I became a Christian through a Billy Graham Rally. Several years after Zoe's death the press was full of news that the Turin Shroud was to be carbon dated. I was so excited because I *knew* it had to be true. When the news came through that they were claiming it to be a fake I was devastated. I had to question what I believed, and decided that if there is no God then Zoe's life meant nothing and I found that unbearable. When our evening newspaper arrived later that day the front page headline said 'Scientists say they are 95% sure the Shroud is a fake.' My heart lifted. 95% was not good enough.

A few years ago my husband Stuart suggested we visit a National Trust House in Leicestershire. Our journey gave us time to call in at a church next to Staunton Harold Hall. As I stepped out of the car I was very aware of the same peace we experienced at Zoe's death. On our way to the church Stuart noticed there was an exhibition on in the Hall, and we decided to go in. The name **Leonard Cheshire** was very prominent in all the information on offer, and as we walked round, inside a chapel was a sculptured head. I said to Stuart: 'That is the head of the Turin Shroud.' He said 'How do you know, there is no name on it?' I replied: 'I just know.' When we got home that evening Start gave me a leaflet he had picked up inside the Hall. Included in the write-up it mentioned **Mrs. Ross Spencer** and how she had been inspired to create this alabaster head from a picture of the Turin Shroud as a gift to Leonard Cheshire.

Several weeks later in a bookshop I came across *The Shroud Unmasked* by **David Sox**. I realised that it was trying to prove the Shroud is a fake. After reading it, not only was I more convinced than ever that the Shroud is real, it held other information which fascinated me. I never realised that the BSTS existed or that Leonard Cheshire had been an important part of it.

Ever since I have been trying to find out if the BSTS still existed and up to a few weeks ago had drawn a blank. On Saturday April 18 I heard on the radio that the Shroud was going to be on show. I desperately wanted to go, but had no idea how to begin looking for the information I needed. That evening, on a visit to my sister, I asked my niece to look on the Internet for information on the Shroud and there I found what I needed.

First of all I contacted **Dr. Clift** and joined the Society and then set about arranging a visit to Turin. It was far from easy, but suddenly everything fell into place. I returned from my trip last Sunday. It was an absolutely wonderful experience...

*Brenda*

*Benton*

*49 Chapel St., Norton Canes, Cannock, Staffs WS11 3NX*

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*From Remi Van Haelst:*

At the recent Turin Shroud Congress scientists such as **Dr. Marie Claire Van Oosterwyck**, Dr. John Jackson, **Mario Moroni** and others showed beyond doubt that there are mechanisms other than radioactive decay which could possibly have altered the Shroud's C14 content.

In my own lecture I stated that I do not doubt the results given by the laboratories. Ian Wilson, as the last speaker in the scientific section, repeated his opinion about the Shroud's true date, while also reiterating that he knows some of the scientists involved and considers them, as I do myself, to be honest and of the highest calibre.

I asked some of these scientists to explain the systematic bias of the unexplained variability showed by the neutral statistical analysis and the difference in  $\delta^{13}C$  between Oxford and the two other laboratories. Why did one bias the  $\chi^2$  test value from 8.56 (% S. Level 1.2) to 6.4 (% S.Level 4.4)? And why was this 4.4% rounded up to 5%, the MINIMUM acceptable level? I asked them also why they did not react concerning the many 'errors' in the Nature paper.

Professor Gove, Dr. Leese, Dr. Tite, Dr. Woelffli, Dr. Hedges, Professor Hall, Professor Evin, Professor Gonella, Prof. Bray, Dr. Donahue, Professor Damon, Professor Testore and the editorial staff of *Nature* all either failed to answer, or avoided, these questions. Is there *anyone* who can get a straight answer from them?

Remi Van Haelst

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## **PHOTOS IN THIS NEWSLETTER**

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