

Shroud-Enigma.com

By David Rolfe

Championing the Shroud can sometimes feel like crying in the wilderness. If the image in question was a pharaoh or, say, King Alfred, and the evidence available was the same, it would have been accepted as *likely* to be authentic and have pride of place in the British Museum. This is not my view but an eminent Egyptologist who confided to me that many PhDs in their field that had earned professorial chairs were based on much more flimsy evidence than we have for the Shroud. It was ever thus. The bar for Jesus was always set high, how could it not be given the claims made for Him. So we must not be downhearted when we find our numbers declining. A new generation has only ever heard of it – if they have heard of it at all – as a triumph for science over fakery and not worth a second look. The frustrating thing is that once an individual has taken that second look and gone deep enough to learn something about it they are, invariably, hooked. Not necessarily with a belief that it is the “snapshot” of the resurrection that some do, but that it is, at the very least, a unique, mysterious and powerful representation of crucified man who somehow seems to have transcended the fate that has befallen him. Iconographically, it is the “embodiment” of “The Christ”. And we know from the diligence of the current and past editor of this journal what a two-way street that is.

TV documentary commissioners place the subject in the genre of things like the Loch Ness Monster, Bigfoot, alien abductions and The Bermuda Triangle. Someone comes along with a fanciful enough theory with pictures attached and it makes a “good story” out will come the cash for a commission. Viz the Picknett/Prince travesties and the History Channel’s perfidious attempt to stand up Nicholas Allen’s photographic theory. Confusion reigns. That is the (arguably worthwhile) price we pay for our pluralist media. That same plurality combined with the marvel of the internet now allows us all now to have a voice. Shroud-enigma.com is one of several sites out there endeavouring to create awareness and allow visitors their own opportunity to come face-to-face with the Man of the Shroud. There are other ways, too. Pam Moon’s Exhibition is a case in point and I am pleased that the first BSTS article to feature on Shroud-Enigma was devoted to it.

However, the beauty of this age is that you do not need to start up a website or mount an exhibition to play your part in spreading the word about your interests. If you have not already done so, join the Facebook Age and the Twitterati. That is the way that good news is spread today. You simply click on the “Like” button and all your friends get curious to see what it is you like. I say this as a very new recruit myself. It is not something that seems to come naturally to the pre-social-networking generation. But, steel yourself and give it a go. It is not just the future it is very much the present, too.

On a similar theme, I am delighted that the BSTS is now publishing a selected article from each edition on shroud-enigma. Print is still very much alive as a glance in any newsagent’s magazine racks will tell you and there is nothing like settling into your favourite chair with a good old-fashioned read. But you will find that the majority of publications have their own websites where the readers can interact and follow things up. That is what the interactive space on the BSTS page is for. So, make of it what you will. It could be a way to comment on any article and in due course, if it works out, it might provide a platform for the Society to expand. I hope so. I hope you will also like the rest of the Shroud-enigma site. If you do, then don’t forget to hit that “Like” button and spread the word.

As I write this on the run up to Easter I am poised to publish a challenge to Richard Dawkins to come up with an explanation for the Shroud's image. He went into press about it in a characteristically dismissive way, which provided me with the opportunity. By the time this article reaches you he may have picked up the gauntlet. If he has then you will probably have already heard about it.

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<http://www.shroud-enigma.com>