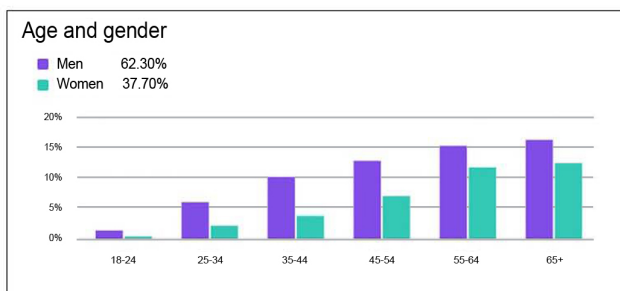


# Time for a Shroud Renaissance!

**Michael Kowalski**

Some of you will no doubt be aware that the BSTS has a Facebook Page in which we regularly post Shroud-related news and information. Over the past two years, nearly 1,700 people have chosen to follow this page, which means that 1,700 Facebook users have chosen to receive details of every new BSTS Facebook post about the Shroud. Whilst this is quite encouraging, a demographic analysis reveals some surprising information about the age profile of our Facebook followers.

Facebook's own analysis of its global userbase reveals that 75% are less than forty-five old <sup>1</sup> so it's perhaps reasonable to expect that a large proportion of our 1,700 followers will belong to this age demographic, however that isn't the case at all. The chart below shows the percentage of our BSTS Facebook Page audience which fall into each of six age-groups. It is immediately apparent from this chart that the audience is dominated by the older age-groups, with less than 25% of our followers being aged below forty-five. It's clear from these two contrasting sets of age-group statistics that the younger generations have little awareness of, or interest in the Shroud.



*Demographic profile of BSTS Facebook Page followers*

Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised at the low levels of interest amongst the youngest age-groups. Worldwide interest in the Shroud reached a peak in the 70s and 80s as a result of fascinating discoveries made by historians and scientists, particularly the findings of members of the STURP team who examined the Shroud for five days in 1978. Many people today who are older than fifty years of age will have read or heard something about the Shroud and these intriguing findings during that time. However, widespread interest in the Shroud declined sharply following the tsunami of publicity generated by the 'medieval fake' verdict of the 1988 radiocarbon dating test. Since then, even the most fascinating and extraordinary discoveries made by Shroud researchers have produced barely a ripple of coverage in popular media, so it's perhaps understandable that most people under forty-five years of age have little interest in, or knowledge of, the Shroud.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.statista.com/statistics/376128/facebook-global-user-age-distribution/>

I must confess that I felt a little deflated when I saw the above BSTS Facebook follower profile earlier this year and reflected on its implications. There have however been several developments in the past six months which have led me to believe that we are beginning to see a change in attitude towards the Shroud. Myra Adams, who is the Founder and Executive Director of the US-based organisation *Sign From God*, is convinced that the United States is witnessing a significant upsurge in interest in the Shroud, which will no doubt increase even further as her plans for a National Shroud of Turin Exhibit in Washington DC begin to unfold in the coming months. As you will see in my interview with Myra in this newsletter, it's a highly ambitious and potentially 'game-changing' project. I am however convinced that Myra's drive, determination and passion for the Shroud, combined with the support of her high-profile team of Shroud researchers and devotees, will prove to be an irresistible force that will successfully overcome the challenge of creating and sustaining this permanent Shroud exhibit.

In the months since our summer newsletter was published, two of our newest members, Bob Dawson and Tony Cunliffe, have also been inspired to write books which summarise the most significant findings revealed by Shroud research. Bob's book *You the Jury – Evidence for the Turin Shroud*<sup>2</sup> and Tony's *The Case of the Missing Body*<sup>3</sup> are particularly suitable for those who know little or nothing about the Shroud and I'm sure that anyone reading them will learn a great deal about the amount of evidence that supports claims of its authenticity. Tony has also been actively engaged in promoting his book by delivering talks about the Shroud in the area of Greater Manchester. Meanwhile, Pam and Phil Moon continue to drive the length and breadth of the UK, raising awareness of the Shroud with their mobile Shroud of Turin Exhibition. It was a delight for me personally to witness an enthusiastic response from people of all age-groups when this was hosted in my home town of Halifax during October.

Another potentially significant development involved Shroud researcher and nuclear scientist Bob Rucker, who was invited to give a presentation on the Shroud to an international conference in Brescia, Italy, organised by the Italian Society for Non-Destructive Testing. This conference, which took place during 28-30 November, was attended by scientists from a variety of different fields, most of whom knew little about the Shroud. However, such was the enthusiasm of the Society's president, Giuseppe Nardoni, for Bob's conference paper that he arranged a break-out workshop during the last day of the conference which covered some of the most significant scientific evidence revealed by Shroud research. I was pleased to join Bob and Marco Ginatta in presenting this evidence and it was clear from our discussions with Giuseppe Nardoni immediately after the conference that he is eager to see another official, scientific examination of the Shroud. With his considerable influence and connections, he may well be a useful ally of Shroud scholars across the world who have been pushing for a future scientific study of the Shroud.

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<sup>2</sup> For more details go to <https://www.robertdawson.co.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> For more details go to <https://www.faithlift.org/shop>

The article Enough! by Barrie Schwartz is a reminder that it is now forty-five years since the STURP team conducted the last official scientific examination of the Shroud. Sadly, we lost another member of this team in September with the passing of Tom D'Muhala, who was responsible for STURP's administration and logistics operations. Although the mortal life of Tom and other STURP members has come to a close, their remarkable contribution to Shroud research lives on and will be remembered for many years to come.

So much of our current scientific understanding of the Shroud is the result of the diligence, hard work and expertise of STURP's highly-respected, multi-disciplinary team of scientists who used the best available techniques and equipment available at that time. However, there have been enormous technological advances in the forty-five years since STURP examined the Shroud and so there can be little doubt that a new examination, conducted by a similar team of high-calibre scientists using the best scientific tools and equipment available today, would lead to even more fascinating discoveries. Perhaps we would then see a worldwide renaissance of interest in the Shroud that will reach into the hearts and minds of the younger generations.



The BSTS welcomes suitable articles and papers for publication.

Submissions, *ideally*, should be formatted on Word.

Please use A5 paper size with narrow margins all round.

Typeface: Times New Roman 10pt.

Submit to:

[editorial@bstsnewsletter.com](mailto:editorial@bstsnewsletter.com)