

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BSTS Member **Hugh Farey** of Bromyard, Herefordshire has written enclosing the results of an experiment to create a photographic image on cloth. Although the photograph on linen produced by Mr. Farey is too faint to be reproducible, his letter is as follows:

The enclosed photograph on cloth is in consequence of some amateur investigation following my reading of the book *Turin Shroud - In Whose Image?* by Lynn Picknett and Clive Prince. Although their work is contentious and in many ways outside my scope to comment on, their basic idea, that the Shroud might be a photograph, is fairly clearly explained, and easily testable. The enclosed sample, however, ignores the physics of getting the image from body to cloth, and concentrates on the chemistry of the finished product, roughly following the guidelines given on pages 163-165 of the book. The principal issue seems to be that of establishing a photographic image made only of degraded cellulose, only on one side of the fibres. This, it is maintained, might be achieved by the use of some sort of intermediate chemical,

I made a solution of 10g of potassium dichromate in 10cl of water, and mixed 100cl of the solution with 30cl of egg-white. The mixture turned from orange to yellow quickly, as it was stirred up. After spreading 10cl of the mixture onto the square of cloth and rubbing it thoroughly on both sides, it was hung up to dry. It was then put in a cupboard, and a black and-white negative shone at it through a slide projector at a range of about 60cm for two hours. The cloth turned burnt-brownish in colour, and the positive image was clearly visible. Picknett and Prince claim that the light made the egg-white/dichromate mixture insoluble, so the cloth was then thoroughly rinsed in cold water. In fact the whole image got fainter, but the paler, unexposed bits did indeed go much paler still, perhaps as a result of the mixture dissolving away. The cloth was dried again, and then ironed with a very hot iron, which seems to have scorched it. It was then boiled in water, and the image virtually disappeared, and such colour as remained was a very pale grey-green. Since then no further treatment has been given it, although curiously the colour seems to have recovered its browner tinge somewhat. As you can see, the remaining image is very indistinct, particularly close to, and only formed on one side of the threads, although without an electron microscope one could not be sure about individual fibres. In these respects it appears to bear comparison with the quality of the markings on the Shroud.

Of course, I am well aware of all the circumstantial objections to this method of manufacture, and as to Picknett and Prince's ideas about Leonardo da Vinci, I find them too complicated and too conspiratorial to be credible. [personally would rather attempt to link the chemistry with an accident of burial procedure leading to a supposed miracle - a cloth sensitized by myrrh and aloes, some sort of focusing device (a pinhole in a coffin?), something like that.

Hugh Farey, Bredenbury Court, Bromyard, HR7 4TD

Roel Oostra TV Documentary

Recently added to the BSTS materials available for loan to Members is a VHS videotape copy of the Roel Oostra TV documentary on the Shroud, as shown at the BSTS meeting last Autumn. This is available on application to the Editor, but to U.K. members only. There should be no need to send postage stamps, as a `chain' system of copies being passed from one member to another has worked successfully so far...