

OBITUARIES

Dr Alan Adler,
Professor of Chemistry

Every so often the Shroudie world loses a giant amongst its number. Dr. Alan Adler was certainly this. A man so full of life and zest and argument that those of us who knew him well can perhaps be forgiven for our failing to give his mortality a second thought. Until suddenly, the night of Saturday 10 June, he passed away peacefully in his sleep, and was gone, both from us and from Jean, his beloved wife of a 46 year marriage.

Of Jewish parentage, Alan Adler has been on the Shroud scene since the late 1970s. His introduction to it came from the late Dr. John Heller who asked him, as a physical chemist and specialist in porphyrins, to help him study the sticky tape samples of the Shroud image that the STURP team had brought back with them from Turin. At that time Heller and the STURP team were in some disarray from Dr. Walter McCrone having dismissed the Shroud's image as just artist's pigment. When Heller first told him that the sticky tapes were from the Shroud of Turin, Adler's reported response was 'The what of where?' - all too typical of him, as those of who knew him are well aware

But as described by Dr. John Heller, Alan Adler was a Renaissance man, 'a physical chemist, thermodynamicist and porphyrin nut... with an encyclopaedic knowledge of the physical and biological sciences, military history, ecology and many other fields.' In partnership with Heller he embarked upon the most exhaustive study of the Shroud samples. From a battery of forensic tests he formed the firm conclusion that the Shroud blood image is indeed from blood, while the body image, although its nature and causation are mysterious, most certainly does not derive from the iron oxide claimed by McCrone. In 1980 he published, with Dr. John Heller, a definitive article on the Shroud blood in the scientific journal *Applied Optics*. The following year, again in partnership with John Heller, he co-authored for the *Canadian Forensic Society Scientific Journal* 'A Chemical Investigation of the Shroud of Turin', a paper which remains one of the most authoritative on what does, and does not, constitute the Shroud image.

Throughout the last two decades Adler has been a regular contributor to both US and international Shroud conferences, his good humour, ebullience, loquacity and above all, consummate scientific knowledge serving always to ensure that he stood out from the rest. In 1986 he travelled to the Far East for the special Shroud Symposium held in Hong Kong. Such was his international reputation that a few years back Cardinal Saldarini, surprised to hear that Alan had never had the opportunity to examine the Shroud proper at first hand, specially invited him to Turin to do so. From this visit he became a key consultant on issues pertaining to the Shroud's conservation, a responsibility that he took very seriously, darkly warning that within a very few years the Shroud's image might disappear. He directly advised on the design of the Italgas casket made to house the cloth for the 1998 expositions and its subsequent long-term storage. He was the leading English-speaking contributor to the Shroud Symposium held in Turin this March, and was also due to speak at the forthcoming Orvieto

Congress. The last message that I received from him, hand-written on May 16, was 'Am moving to Patagonia - no mail, phone, fax, etc [Alan never did take up e-mail]. Have finally gotten authorization from the new custodian to use my 'samples' except for C14 dating. Can now move ahead with Steve Mattingly. Behind on everything -as usual. Best regards, yourself and Judith - Al'.

Well, Alan is now in his 'Patagonia'. He was 69 and up to his retirement Professor of Chemistry and West Connecticut State University, where he taught for many years. At the time of writing the University are arranging a Memorial Service. The cause of his death (subject to confirmation) was a cerebral haemorrhage. No other single figure on the Shroud scene had Alan's huge grasp of the scientific complexities of the subject. The full ramifications of his loss have yet to be realised.

Anna Hulbert,

Conservator of the Templecombe panel painting

BSTS lecturer Anna Hulbert has died of cancer at the age of only 55. She gave a most memorable talk to the Society on 29 January 1988, the original scheduled date for this having been the day of the Great Storm which blacked out London and devastated much of the south-east. This caused the meeting's postponement until the January.

Anna Hulbert's theme was the Templecombe panel painting, with its so Shroud-like face, the conservation of which she had worked on in 1986 as one of England's most noted art conservators. At that time she wrote to me: 'I have long been fascinated by the Shroud: about 1955 I heard a lecture on it (as a child) and felt most convinced, and the family thought I was a bit peculiar. Now I find myself working at Templecombe!'

Born the daughter of a brigadier, at Wetwood, Staffordshire, in 1944, Anna studied Early Christian and 15th century art history at the Courtauld, graduating in 1966, and had her first taste of emergency, hands-on conservation work in the wake of the disastrous Florence floods which followed shortly after. From 1969-71 she returned to the Courtauld for further conservation studies, during which time a mediaeval canvas known as the Buxton Achievement, from the Stranger's Hall, Norwich, was one of the items the studio was working on. Her first professional assignment was the tomb of Edmund 'Crouchback' Earl of Lancaster, who died in 1296, causing her to marvel at the craftsmanship that she found close-to. The tomb was first covered with silver leaf, then red lead, with a thumbnail pattern of tiny lions pressed out on this, finally finished with a varnish of rose madder, all as background.

Anna Hulbert went on to work on restoring and conserving, mediaeval artwork in churches throughout Britain, called in by parishes wherever they had been able to raise sufficient funds, from jumble sales, flower festivals and the like, to fund her work. She would be boarded in anything from a caravan during the months that an assignment could sometimes demand. As was remarked in the obituary about her published in the *Daily Telegraph*. 'Small parishes could never afford the sort of fees

that her skills were worth 'You look at the object.' Anna Hulbert explained, 'then at the holes in the carpet. After that you make your estimate.'

An expert on mediaeval horsemanship, on which she had written a thesis, only last year Anna Hulbert rode on horseback across Romania looking at 36 monasteries that a Romanian prince had built in commemoration of 36 battles fought checking the advance of the Turks into Europe.

Quite independently of his interest in the Shroud, BSTS Treasurer Reggie Norton and his wife Emily had known Anna Hulbert for many years. Her Wantage home was not far from theirs.

Meriol Trevor, Biographer and Novelist

One of the lesser known members of the BSTS was the writer Meriol Trevor, who from her home in Bath corresponded from time to time with this editor and with General Secretary Dr. Michael Clift. Born in 1919, and a Classics graduate of St. Hugh's College, Meriol Trevor began as an agnostic humanist, but was received into the Roman Catholic Church at Oxford in 1950. She is best known for a highly-acclaimed two volume biography of Cardinal Newman, based on hitherto unpublished letters and diaries, which was published in 1962 and was awarded the James Tate Black Memorial Prize for biography. The subjects of other highly-researched biographies by her have included Thomas Arnold, King James II, Philip Neri and Pope John XXIII.

But she also wrote children's stories, and adult novels which similarly reflect her religious leanings. It was natural for her, therefore, to become interested in the Shroud, an interest she maintained up to her death on 12 January of this year.

Professor Lamberto Coppini, Professor of Anatomy

The first Shroud conference to be held in the aftermath of the radiocarbon dating of 1988 was the Bologna International Symposium 'La Sindone e Le Icone' held the weekend of May 6 and 7, 1989 at Bologna's Collegio S.Luigi. As those of us who attended this became aware, the man who more than any other master-minded this well-organized meeting was Professor Lamberto Coppini of the Bologna anatomy school. Profoundly convinced of the Shroud's authenticity from his medical knowledge, it was Professor Coppini's continuing intention to publish the proceedings of this Symposium. Only quite recently he was in touch to confirm some publication details, but sadly, he died before the work could be completed. Now this has been taken up by his friends and family, and the proceedings will shortly be published in his memory, by the major Italian publishing house Edizioni San Paolo of Milan, under the title *Le Icone di Christo e la Sindone*.