

## Mark Guscin on the role of an Editor

Editing the Newsletter of the British Society for the Turin Shroud mainly involves receiving articles and deciding whether or not they are suitable for publication. The kind of articles looked for should not be overly technical - i.e. the BSTS is not a peer reviewed academic journal, and its members should not be expected all to have first class degrees in physics. At the same time articles should be serious, sound, well-informed, well-written and inclusive of something new and/or of interest to the Shroud community at large. This means that the editor should have a general idea of all areas of Shroud research and - reflecting the Society's Constitution - should respect for all shades of opinion, just as long as such shades are themselves expressed with respect. (I have often published articles that I personally do not agree with, but the BSTS is about the Shroud, not about the editor's personal opinions).

By definition an editor should, of course, be able to edit to a high standard, judiciously pruning, re-punctuating and rephrasing contributors' material wherever necessary, particularly when articles have been submitted by someone for whom English is not his or her first language. In keeping with this digital age an editor also needs to be able to use a computer publishing programme with sufficient skill to present the Newsletter in a form that is fully laid out with all the necessary photographs and footnotes, page numbered and ready for the printer. I always worked in Quark Express, but other editing programmes such as Microsoft Publisher are equally good.

Other more mundane tasks include updating membership lists with information from the treasurer, updating the labels, printing the labels, printing renewal reminders and final reminders (for those who have forgotten to renew), putting them in the right envelopes, and then putting the newsletters in the envelopes with the address stickers attached and sending them out (I used DHL Global Mailing).

A word of warning – no matter what the editor does or does not, someone somewhere will criticise it. And there are plenty of eccentrics out there who are convinced they have found the answer to the Shroud's unanswered questions and they don't like it when you refuse to publish their "research". But on the whole it is a very rewarding task, and well worth the effort involved.