

## Chapter 1

### ART AS INFORMATION

Before we begin, I think we should have a bit of fun trying to demonstrate that, not only can we gain real information from, what is a comedy movie, 'Life of Brian' but the other arts, like paintings and sculpture, can also be used to provide very important clues. Here, for instance, is a statue of Jesus and the Baptist from the heretical French church of Rennes-le-Château.



There are hundreds of books about how the Priest, Abbé Saunière suddenly became rich and with this inexplicable money carried out major works on the church. And vital to us is that he inserted heretical information in many of the stained-glass windows and statues he erected.

Can you see that Saunière's statue of the Baptist appears to show the Baptist as the more important person, with Jesus being very deferential? The Baptist's costume even

gives him more stature than the usual accepted Baptist's dress. If you don't see it, compare it to a more typical statue of the Baptism.



What about that other esoteric Church, St. Sulpice in Paris, which has been a hotbed for both occultism and modernism? Much is talked about weird details inside, but for some reason nobody mentions what is outside. Round to the right side, there imposingly built into a niche, is a huge statue of John the Baptist. Why do both churches portray the Baptist so prominently when they are not churches dedicated to the Baptist?



And what do you make of the pointing finger? Either it points to heaven, which could be a feature of any religious statue, or perhaps like the statue in Rennes-le-Château it is a statue proclaiming that John the Baptist is number one! 'Number one' means that Jesus was not number one.

Okay you think this is a bit far-fetched? And in Python language, 'very, very silly'. I would agree with you if that was the only pointing finger we have to consider. But now we come to the more mischievous finger pointing by Leonardo?



This, would you believe, is a painting by Leonardo of John the Baptist. If you were not told, there is no way you would think it was John with that weird, knowing smile. Do you believe what the National Gallery says about the finger?

*'The finger pointing to heaven, alludes to Christ's future destiny'.*

Surely not! With that knowing grin he is supposed to be thinking of Jesus' death and resurrection? Come on, this clearly has absolutely nothing to do with Christ's passion. Leonardo is clearly trying to tell us something. Remember some experts have claimed that Leonardo was a

Rosicrucian or at least had, what they call, Rosicrucian beliefs.

I realize that this is all hard to accept. I need then to introduce you to another pointing finger in Leonardo's 'The Burlington House Cartoon'. You've probably never noticed that the design appears perfect, but then hardly visible is the finger pointing upwards. Do you see it, upper right?



Here is the National Gallery description:

*'The Virgin Mary sits on the lap of her mother, Saint Anne. The Christ Child blesses his cousin Saint John the Baptist. Leonardo also treated the meeting of the two children in his two painting of the Virgin of the Rocks. Both works are set in a wild mountainous landscape.'*

Surely that older woman is not Mary's mother, Ann. The older woman has to be, Elizabeth the mother of John the Baptists who was said to be too old to have children. But the finger! No mention of the finger indicating what?

I imagine you are beginning to think that maybe I am not so crazy after all, and there is something going on with these fingers. So perhaps we should look at some more



pointing fingers in Leonardo paintings. Consider his paintings of the Virgin of the Rocks. There are two, one in the Paris Louvre and the other in the National Gallery, London.



In the Louvre version, the angel is pointing at one of the babies, but is it Jesus or John? A later artist added a reed cross to the London version suggesting the baby the Angel in the Louvre is pointing at is the Baptist. He is placed higher than Jesus who looks up at him. Was the Louvre version painted first and the church demanded the finger to be removed because it suggested John is more important than Jesus?

Before you dismiss that idea and go back to thinking I'm crackers, take a look at Leonardo's famous painting of the Last Supper. Later we will deal with Dan Brown's 'Da Vinci Code' suggestion that the disciple Jesus loved on his right looks like a woman so it must be Mary Magdalene. Of course that would leave only eleven disciples and the Bible clearly states the Beloved disciple is a man:

*‘When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son”. (John 19:25)*

How Leonardo portrayed this young man probably has more to do with him being gay as much as anything else.

Anyway, that aside, with all this talk about the painting yet nobody ever mentions the finger, which is framed against black, so Leonardo has made sure you don’t miss it. What are we to make of it? Is it thrust into Jesus face to say someone else is number one, not you?



Leonardo always seems to paint the hand the same, as if he is trying to make us aware that it has meaning. Here again is the one from the Burlington house Cartoon.



Actually I think we should go back and have a bit of fun with the '*Virgin on the Rocks*'. Leonardo received a brief in 1483 from the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception, a brotherhood of Franciscan monks, (not Nuns as Dan Brown reports) elected to promote the Vatican's doctrine of the immaculate conception. It is a doctrine that suggests the Virgin mother, like Jesus, was also conceived without sex. So, Leonardo painted the '*Virgin of the Rocks*' of which there has been much speculation because it appears at first glance to have nothing much to do with an immaculate conception. And there is no story in the Bible that this scene seems to illustrate. A woman and an angel in a cave in a very fertile land with the baby Jesus and baby John? But there is one major aspect of the painting that does suggest the immaculate conception that nobody dares talk about!



Look again, am I mad or is that strange rock sticking up in the hole on the right, not the most phallic thing you have ever seen in your life?

Surely it cannot be an accident, a slip of the brush to look like that. It even appears as if it is spouting something. And to make sure you don't think it is a mistake, the rocks on the left are in the form of a giant hand. Is this God's rock hand and rock... that impregnated the virgin? Is this another example of Leonardo's famed sense of humour or is it just a very naughty boy's imagination.

I should round off this chapter about information that we can gain from paintings by returning to Leonardo's paintings of John the Baptist, with the index finger raised. I suggested this could be proclaiming John the Baptist as number one. Okay you were very sceptical at the time but I am going to prove to you exactly what I suggested.

Let me tell you about a collection of documents, deposited anonymously in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris during the 1960s. They contain rather odd but accurate information about French history concerning the Church at Rennes-le-Château and certain underground organizations including the Templars. All were written under pseudonyms or attributed to people later found to be deceased and who, as far as researchers could tell, had nothing to do with them. One of the authors was finally discovered to be Philippe de Chéresey and was said by him to be a sort of surrealist joke to create a supposedly ancient organization called the Priory of Sion. This Priory of Sion, in fact was not ancient as it was first registered in 1956. So now the whole event is taken as a hoax. The problem is that some of the information is so obscure yet so accurate that it would take years of research to discover – just for a joke?

I am not saying Philippe de Chéresey's dossiers were not a hoax, I am saying that they had a source of information not available to the Academic world, and they used it to give credence to their 'so called' joke. We will deal with this unnamed source later but the dossiers list an unbelievable list of Grand Masters from a splinter group of the Templars. I cannot tell you if it is real, but I cannot quite believe anyone could write a list of 26 people, which starts in 1188 to recent times, which links known and little-known people whose interconnections actually are not obvious, without a great deal of research. It would be a massive undertaking just for a gag.

It is said the people in the list were not called Grand Masters but Nautonniers, which is French for Navigators. So here is the extraordinary, or perhaps ridiculous, list of Nautonniers.

Jean de Gisors (1188–1220)

Marie de Saint-Clair (1220–1266)-

Guillaume de Gisors (1266–1307)

Edouard de Bar (1307–1336)

Jeanne de Bar (1336–1351)

Jean de Saint-Clair (1351–1366)

Blanche d'Évreux (1366–1398)

Nicolas Flamel (1398–1418)

René d'Anjou (1418–1480)

Iolande de Bar (1480–1483)

Sandro Botticelli (1483–1510)

Leonardo da Vinci (1510–1519)

Connétable de Bourbon (1519–1527)

Ferrante I Gonzaga (1527–1575)

Ludovico Gonzaga (1575–1595)

Robert Fludd (1595–1637)

J. Valentin Andrea (1637–1654)  
Robert Boyle (1654–1691)  
Isaac Newton (1691–1727)  
Charles Radclyffe (1727–1746)  
Charles de Lorraine (1746–1780)  
Maximilian de Lorraine (1780–1801)  
Charles Nodier (1801–1844)  
Victor Hugo (1844–1885)  
Claude Debussy (1885–1918)  
Jean Cocteau (1918–1963)

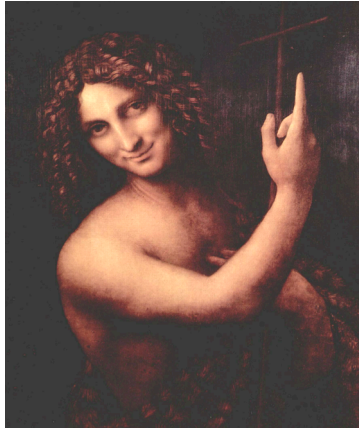
In 1629, Robert Denyau, curé of Gisors, composed a history of the Gisors family, the *'Histoire polytique de Gisors et du pays de Vulcsain.'* This manuscript now in the Bibliothèque de Rouen states that the Rose-Croix was founded by the first on the list, Jean de Gisors. So, this suggests the list is a list of members of l'Ordre de la Rose-Croix Veritas not the Priory of Sion.

Originally the Rosicrucian organization was thought to be founded by a Christian Rosenkreutz who wrote the Rosicrucian manifesto, *The Chemical Wedding*, but it was later admitted that this was written by a member of the above list, Johann Valentin Andrea, a German theologian who confessed he had written it as a 'ludibrium'- a joke! Not another joke!

Anyway, true or fake, these Chiefs all take on the name John and a number (John XXI followed by John XXII) But what is interesting is that the first, Jean de Gisors is John II. The writers of the "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" who first published the list, were unsure which historical John was John I, but they suspected it was John the Baptist. Can we now be certain that John I, was in fact John the Baptist,

which explains the raised index finger in the paintings, telling us who exactly was number one?

You still don't believe me? Look again at the painting. The right hand index finger indicates one, but look who his other hand is pointing to. His left hand points to himself!



There can be no doubt that the Baptist is telling us "*I am number one*".

When I first showed you the Baptist outside St. Sulpice with a finger raised and suggested it might indicate that he is number one, you probably thought I was bonkers, but now it is getting harder and harder to deny this possibility.



So, if John the Baptist is number one then that make Leonardo da Vinci, who was Nautonnier between 1510 to



1519, John XIII? And is that why he is selling his predecessor John the Baptist, as number one?

And I should add that John Cocteau, the last on the list, who died in 1963, was John XXIII, exactly the same name as the Pope, John XXIII who took office till he also died in 1963. Incredible coincidence or something else? According to Vatican insider, Malachi Martin, Pope John XXIII was suspected of being a Freemason and began a massive reform of the church.

Interestingly, Freemasons do hold the Baptist in high esteem. Here is a statement from one Masonic Lodge on a pamphlet declaring the most important day of the Freemason's year:

*'By history, custom, tradition and ritualistic requirements, the Craft holds in veneration the Festival Day of St. John the Baptist on June 24th.*

The document continues to admit: *"No satisfactory explanation has yet been advanced to explain why."* But it is clear from a painting in the same document that, like Leonardo, someone is placing John above Jesus.



The whole thing raises several questions. Clearly the Masons writing this document don't know why they are

celebrating John the Baptist. So does this remind us of Eliphaz Levi's comment:

*'The Chiefs alone knew whither they were going; the rest followed unsuspectingly.'*

This was a comment about the Templars but can it also be true of the Freemasons, and that both organizations had secret chiefs who set the agenda? Or is it just that the agenda was set so many years ago that the motives have since been forgotten?

As the two books that mention the list of Nautonniers and the Priory of Sion, 'Holy Blood', and 'Da Vinci Code', have had such an influence and caused such argument about whether such an occult organization existed and whether Leonardo was part of it, I want to quote from a book written in 1978, well before the two books were written. The book is called 'The Hidden Art' and the author, F. Gettings wrote about occult imagery in Leonardo paintings.

*'One may only speculate where Leonardo obtained his knowledge of this heretical tradition, which we nowadays relate to 'esoteric Christianity', but which even in the sixteenth century would have been quite heretical....Perhaps Leonardo da Vinci was himself an initiate, a secret adept, and had the knowledge and had the insights from his own personal insights.'*

So, art historian, Gettings had spotted something without any knowledge of the fake Priory of Sion story of the two later books, which does suggest something strange was going on in Leonardo's work.

You may be wondering why John the Baptist was considered, by some significant people, to be more

important than Jesus? But I am afraid I don't know the answer to that, although I have a few vague theories. I used this example to show, without any pre-conceived ideas, or with no attempt to prove a pet theory of mine, that just using paintings it is possible to discover hidden beliefs.

I hope you don't consider this to have been a waste of time, but some of the information that has unfolded will prove very useful later on, even if I cannot answer the basic question posed by this strange journey into Leonardo paintings

Just so you don't think I am talking only about paintings let me offer you details from literature which will also prove useful later on. 'The Three Musketeers' is a French novel written in 1844 by Alexandre Dumas. Strange as it seems both the hero, d'Artagnan and the villain Cardinal Richelieu are real people. D'Artagnan was in fact a Musketeer who was born in 1611 and died in 1673 at the siege of Maastricht. Cardinal Richelieu was a French statesman who was born in 1585 and died in 1642. He was both a Cardinal and chief minister to King Louis XIII of France.

For us the real question is why was Richelieu made the villain of the story since he was one of the most successful statesmen in French history? He entered the 30 year war late and France was the only country to come out of it successfully replacing Spain as the dominant country in Europe.

One of the people mentioned earlier in the list of Nautonniers is the Duke of Lorraine, Rennés d'Anjou, whose early relative was a Crusader, who was instrumental behind the Knights Templar. The Lorraine family led a movement to dethrone Louis XIII and remove his chief

minister Cardinal Richelieu, which turned into a civil war called the Fronde.

Although the Fronde failed, Louis XIII was childless and rumours suggested he was either homosexual, or sexually incapacitated. But then in 1638, after 23 years of sterile marriage, his wife, Ann of Austria, suddenly produced a son. Few people believed in the boy's legitimacy and most considered the child's true father was Cardinal Richelieu, or possibly his protégé and successor, Cardinal Mazarin.

The birth of this son was a serious blow to the hopes of the House of Lorraine, but a highly organized secret society appeared called the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrament, which was founded around 1628 by a nobleman who has remained anonymous even to this day. The only names we know are of low ranking officials who acted as front men for the hidden hierarchy. Some of the names we do know are the mysterious St. Vincent de Paul, Nicholas Pavillion, bishop of Alet, the town a few miles from the heretical church at Rennes-le-château and Jean-Jaques Olier, founder of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. In fact, Saint Sulpice is now generally accepted to have been the Compagnie's centre of operations.

Contemporary accounts refer to 'the secret which is at the core of the Compagnie'. And according to one of the society's statutes, discovered long afterwards; *'The primary channel which shapes the spirit of the Compagnie, and which is essential to it, is the secret.'*

To the novices, the supposed role of the Compagnie was charitable work, especially in the regions devastated by the Fronde. Of course these were areas like Lorraine, so help was forwarded to one side of the conflict. And the other supposed role was to weed out heretics. We will come

across this front of charitable work in other secret societies, as well as them appearing to be arch-Catholic bastions of orthodoxy as a cover for exactly the opposite.

Back to Alexandre Dumas, the writer of 'The Three Musketeers', he was highly political participating in the overthrow of King Charles X in 1830 and writing a play called the Fronde, so we begin to see why Richelieu is the villain of the piece.

I should add that the strange way Joan of Arc was given the armies of France to lead, is impossible to understand without knowing that she was brought up in Lorraine and secretly sponsored by Nautonnier, Rennés d'Anjou, which is why she was called the Maid of Lorraine. But that is for another book that I will have to write.

This chapter set out to convince you that, not only can one have a lot of fun unravelling history, but there can be important information in all forms of art, so to finish I want to quote from one of the documents deposited secretly in the Bibliothèque National that hints at the use of art to communicate between initiates.

*'Allegorical works have this advantage. That a single word suffices to illumine connections, which the multitude cannot grasp. Such works are available to everyone, but their significance addresses itself to an elite. Above and beyond the masses, sender and receiver understand each other. The inexplicable success of certain works derives from this quality of allegory, which constitutes not a mere fashion, but a form of esoteric communication.'*

## Chapter 2

### THE FIRST QUESTION

The last chapter suggested there was information in art work put there on purpose, but this book is about information that was accidentally put into the movie, 'Life of Brian'. I say not on purpose but the Python team are actually very well educated individuals who were at Oxford and Cambridge Universities together, so some of their choices were well informed even if they did not quite get the full implications of what they were doing.

From the start I have to admit that it is reported by every Roman historian past or present that crucifixion was the method of capital punishment used to kill rebels and slaves. For instance, Plutarch reports that after the Spartacus revolt some *'6,000 survivors were captured by the legions of Crassus. All 6,000 were crucified along the Appian Way from Rome to Capua.'* Then Jewish historian Josephus writing in 75 AD reports that many Jews were crucified during the revolt against Rome in 70 AD. He gives a figure of five hundred during the siege of Jerusalem and also following the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC, he reports that in Galilee:

*'Varus sent his army into the country, to seek out those that had been the authors of the revolt; and when they were discovered, he punished those that were most guilty: now the number of those that were crucified were two thousand.'*

The most conclusive I can find is another of Josephus' reports '*I saw many captives crucified, and found three of them were my former acquaintances. I was very sorry and went with tears in my eyes to Titus, and told him; so he immediately commanded them to be taken down, and to have the greatest care taken of them, in order to aid their recovery; yet two of them died under the physician's hands, while the third recovered.*

I can quote you multiple mentions similar to these, of individuals as well as groups crucified, so you will see that I am really up against the odds to think I can persuade you that this is based on a massive lie and the Romans never used crucifixion as a method of capital punishment for slaves and rebels. But not only will I persuade you but I will identify the initial liar.

Before I begin with, what you must think, is an impossible task, I just want to touch on one aspect of Jesus' crucifixion that may surprise you. There are no paintings of the event for us to consider! Okay, you have seen millions of such paintings but there are none from the first hundred years after his death, and none from the second hundred years, and none from the third. It is not until the fifth century that scenes of the Crucifixion began to appear. And this is the very first.





Yes, this is it, the very first image of the crucifixion of Christ, which appears on a single small relief panel on a wooden door of the Church of Santa Sabina in Rome. Construction commenced during the pontificate of Pope Celestine (422–432) and it was consecrated in AD 440, almost exactly 400 years after the event. Can you believe there is no image of Jesus being crucified before this? And even this is of little use to us as it tells us nothing about the process. The crosses are not represented, only two vertical posts in the background and the three crucified figures are not even attached to them. They stand in the orans position of prayer and although there are nails visible in the hands, we have no idea from this what the process may have actually looked like. This Crucifixion panel is one of twelve panels and is at the very top of the left hand door of the church, a rather out-of-the-way location for the central tenet of Christianity.



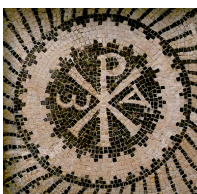
Look at a later representation where we find a more recognizable version of the crucifixion, except that the Romans portrayed Jesus as Apollo since they had no idea what the Jewish son of God, actually looked like. It was

carved on a small ivory box in Rome or possibly Gaul, around AD 445.



It offers us the idea that Jesus is on a platform with no pressure at all on the nails in the hands, which is interesting in itself. The erect posture on the cross and his alertness and robust body might strike us as rather strange and unreal. If you think that this is just this particular artist you are wrong because, this is the way the earliest images appear. What is depicted here is emphasizing Jesus' triumph over death. He sinks lower and lower over time as the concept changed from a victor over death, to our modern suffering to redeem our sins.

That is not the only strange thing about the process; when excavating a Roman villa in England, I remember seeing on TV the archaeologists announcing that the occupants were Christian, because they uncovered an X shaped cross in a mosaic floor of the villa. I was surprised.



Was this really considered a Christian image? It appears that the vertical cross was originally not in use at all but the

X shaped cross of the Chi-rho. This appears in pagan papyri, where the sign was used for the Greek word 'chreston', meaning auspicious. It is also described in Plato's *Timaeus* where he used the X cross as a symbol to represent his concept of the World Soul. The *Timaeus* is, of course, famous for the only historical reference to Atlantis.

We know the vertical cross was not in use when Constantine fought the Battle of Milvian bridge in 312 AD, even though in paintings and films, Constantine is shown seeing a cross in the sky, which stimulated him to paint it on the shields of his soldiers, which brought him victory.



But we have contemporary evidence written by the Christian, Lactantius, who was both a friend of Constantine and tutor to his son, Crispus that it was not that cross.

*'Constantine was advised in his sleep to mark the heavenly sign of God on the shields and then engage in battle. He did as he was commanded and by means of a slanted letter X with the top of its head bent round he marked Christ on the shields. Armed with this sign the army took up its weapons. The army of Maxentius was seized with terror and he himself fled to the bridge where he was hurled into the Tiber. (Lactantius De Mort)*

So clearly these paintings are wrong and we can be reasonably certain that the X was changed to the vertical cross only after the time of Constantine when the Roman Empire officially took over the Christian religion. And it is only after the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which was called to find a consensus among all the Christian sects that paintings of Jesus crucified began to appear. So, what could any of these first painter know about the details of what had happened three hundred years earlier?

Now we have to confront the many unanswered questions about the crucifixion. You probably imagined there were no unanswered questions about one of the most famous events in history. You would think not, but I was forced to confront quite a few during the filming of Monty Python's *Life of Brian*.

For those who do not know the comedy group, their film is a very popular British comedy about Brian Cohen who was born in the stable next to Jesus and is mistaken for the Messiah. After many adventures Brian goes on to be crucified with twenty other characters from the film. While up on their crosses, the gang sing the very famous song, *'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life'* as their grand finale, which I understand has become one of the most popular songs to be played at British funerals.



We shot the movie in Tunisia and it was in the fourth week of filming that we headed south to film the ending crucifixion scene near the troglodyte village used as Luke Skywalker's home planet. That night I puzzled and puzzled about what I had seen and over the next days, as I edited the footage of the end song, I realized something was unravelling about the process.

The first question that struck me was very, very trivial, but it kept me awake. Where did the trees come from? You can see there are just a few palms in the dry, arid land, where we filmed so we imported them. What about Jerusalem? On a visit, I can tell you there are not a lot of trees there, just a few cypresses on the Mount of Olives.

Three trees for Jesus and the two criminals is possible, but thirty years after Jesus' death, the Roman army laid siege to Jerusalem, as reported by Josephus. He writes that the Romans crucified five hundred Jews. Five hundred trees? Where did they come from especially as it is reported that when the Crusaders laid siege to Jerusalem in 1099, they dismantled their ships and carried the wood 35 miles to Jerusalem to make siege engines? Surely if there were plenty of trees, they would have used them.

Perhaps you think that there were more trees in Jesus' time. But look what the Bible says happened when King Solomon wanted to build a Palace.

*'Solomon sent this message to Hiram king of Tyre: "Send me cedar logs as you did for my father David when you sent him cedar to build a palace to live in." (2 Chronicles 2:3)*

And then for the building of the Jerusalem Temple Solomon sent another message to Hiram:

*'I intend to build a temple for the Name of the Lord. So, give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians.'*

*(1 Kings 5–6)*

Solomon obviously doesn't think much of Israelite carpenters, even those from Nazareth. Hiram sent word back:

*'I will do all you want in providing the cedar and juniper logs. My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea, and I will float them as rafts by sea. There I will separate them and you can take them away. And you are to grant my wish by providing food for my royal household.... In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar logs he wanted, and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year.'*

*(1 Kings 5–11).*

The cedars of Lebanon are mentioned 77 times in the Bible so the country must have made quite a lot of dosh out of the trade as the cedar tree even appears on their flag.



So, can we agree, trees were a scarce and valuable commodity, in Jerusalem at that time? Makes you wonder how much work there was for a carpenter! But that's a story we will deal with later.

It is not just the Bible or Josephus where these unlikely figures appear. At that time I knew about the Spartacus slave revolt as I had, not only read Plutarch's account but I also loved the film, 'Spartacus' starring Kirk Douglas. In Plutarch's report he states that after the defeat of Spartacus, 6,000 slaves were crucified along the Appian Way outside Rome. Six thousand trees! What happened, did they cut down a forest to crucify these 6,000 slaves?

I know this is a very trivial point but nobody has even asked the question let alone answered it. Why? Is it that academics are not known for being very practical, getting a workman to do their manual tasks. This certainly appears to be the case when we move on to making a cross.